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ABSTRACT

Four newsletter issues examine aspects of rural special education. Issue number one considers the generic problems or solutions in rural special education leadership, the need for innovative preservice preparation for rural educators, preservice training for Native American professionals and paraprofessionals, a model for rural early intervention, a collaborative college-school district preservice approach, and potentially generic problem-solving strategies. Issue 2 focuses on rural transition programs, with articles on program needs, federal initiatives, problem solving strategies, summaries of exemplary rural transition program, and a review of a 1984 national conference on partnerships between schools and the private sector in rural America. Issue 3 centers on rural family-professional relationships and includes information on parent-professional partnerships in Vermont and Alaska, problem solving strategies, and resources and programs. Issue 4 presents an article on educational assessment in rural areas, along with responses of four persons to the authors' proposed model. Additional articles address prevention of exploitation, cost effectiveness considerations in delivering school psychology services, rural scholarship information, summaries of resources and exemplary programs, and a discussion of administrative and judicial treatment of retarded adults in trouble. (CL)

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Western Washington University
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Vol. 5 No. 1 Spring 1984

RSEQ Headquarters Moves to Bellingham, Washington

Beginning August 1, 1984, **the RSEQ** headquarters will be located at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. We are experiencing tremendous support from Western, and you will receive the same high quality service from our new location.

New Address: **Rural Special Education Quarterly**
Western Washington University
Bellingham, WA 98225

P. S. Watch for the "Call for Papers" for the Fifth Annual National Rural Special Education Conference to be held in Bellingham in March of 1985. Participants can fly into Bellingham via San Juan International Airlines. Pre and post conference activities will include trips to Vancouver, British Columbia and the famous San Juan Islands.

SPECIAL PRESERVICE ISSUE

This quarter, the **RSEQ** is published as a special issue devoted to innovative rural preservice preparation programs. Included are descriptions of existing programs, many of which are funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, which are working to train teachers to work with the special problems encountered in special education service delivery in rural areas. Articles describe special education leadership roles, college/local district cooperation in inservice and preservice curriculum development and special programs for diverse cultures.

The Rural Special Education Quarterly has been published since the Fall of 1979 as the National Rural Project (NRP) Newsletter. The Quarterly is still produced by The National Rural Project and will continue to feature up-to-date information on issues regarding services to disabled individuals in rural America. The subscription remains $12.00 per year.

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Generic Problems or Solutions in Rural Special Education Leadership

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The question frequently arises, "What is generic about rural special education?" Essentially, only problems are generalizable. Most rural areas can identify funding inadequacies, personnel recruitment and retention, transportation, serving low-incidence handicapped populations, needs for staff development, and resistance to change as major problems (Helge, 1984).

Is it the case that once we have identified the problems, the solutions flow automatically? The National Rural Project receives numerous queries each year requesting "What are generalizable solutions to problems identified in rural special education programs?" The answer, of course, is that there are no generalizable solutions.

The diversity of ruralness requires leaders with unique human, conceptual, and technical skills. This concept has not been well understood by those preparing special education leadership personnel throughout America. Special education administrators and supervisors are being trained similarly regardless of whether their ultimate employment objective is a rural setting or a large urban area (with the possible exception of practica and internship placements). **Training programs have been lulled by the fact that there are a number of generalizable skills which leadership personnel must have regardless of the setting.** For example, PL94-142 regulations do not differentiate between rural and urban settings (although the ultimate implementation of the law differs markedly). It is much easier to educate leadership trainees about desired placement options using the Reynolds "Continuum of Services Model" (1962) than it is to face the realities about rural school systems (e.g., small numbers of children with a wide diversity of disabilities who must be served by teachers who are not certified in all areas of handicapping conditions present).

Solutions to generalizable problems in rural America are specialized. They are based on constellations of factors such as those illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1
"Dimensions of Solutions"

In any special education leadership position, the relationship of leadership skills, resources, and community and school system infrastructures must be taken into consideration when solving problems such as inadequate funding, transportation, etc. However, in rural areas the interplay of these dimensions is much more personalized and potentially volatile. In rural America, special education administrators rarely have the luxury of "passing the buck." They are the "person in charge" of the entire special education operation. Even though other leadership staff in the school system—assistant superintendents, superintendents, and principals — have ultimate line authority over the programs, they usually will defer to the special education leader's judgment on issues related to serving children with disabilities. Thus, rather than being protected by a bureaucracy, a special education leader in a rural school system is the "point person" and will garner garlands or garbage depending upon his or her ability to function within the three dimensions depicted within Figure 1.

The Law of Non-Absolutes.

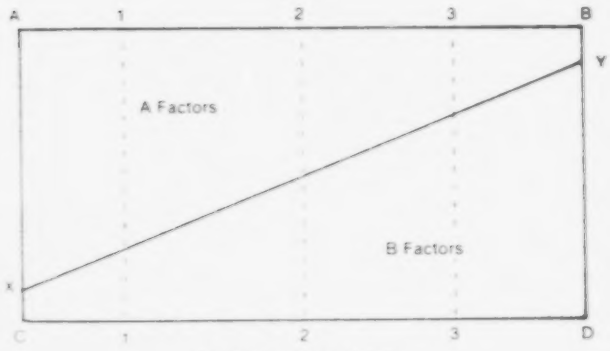
The primary requisite for a leadership person in a rural school system is to understand that there are few "givens" and many variables. The Law of Non-Absolutes is contained in two axioms:

Axiom # I. Everything In Life Is On A Continuum

Axiom #II. There Is No Such Thing As A Pure Model

These axioms can be easily understood through analysis and discussion of Figure 2.

Figure 2



LAW OF NON ABSOLUTES

It will be noted that rectangle ABCD has within it a line (X, Y) which bisects the rectangle into A Factors and B Factors. If A Factors and B Factors are considered to be variables inherent in any decision, then one can easily see that decisions made at point 1 will have more A Factors than B Factors. Conversely, decisions at point 3 will have more B Factors involved than A Factors.

Since "There is no such thing as a pure model," line X, Y does not contact the rectangle at points C and B. As a result of the Law of Non-Absolutes, we find rural resource room teachers acting as consulting teachers and self-contained special education teachers serving as resource room teachers. Additionally, decisions whether to buy buses or snowmobiles for transporting rural staff or students must be balanced against the possible use of computers and satellite TV.

Once rural special education administrators and supervisors recognize the validity of the Law of Non-Absolutes, they can begin to use or develop many human, conceptual, and technical skills which will enable them to be successful survivors in their school systems. ("Successful" here means that they not only will keep their jobs but that children with disabilities will receive appropriate services as a result of their creative leadership.)

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The next three sections of this paper analyze the dimensions of the model depicted in Figure 1. The components of each of these dimensions should be considered as A Factors or B Factors (from Figure 2). That is, they are always variable rather than givens and are, therefore, available to the special education leader as tools or vehicles to get things done.

I. **LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

This dimension describes the skills needed by the individual special education leader. As depicted in Figure 2, each person will have more or less of the various components of each of these leadership skills. (However, no one will have all or none of any specific skill.)

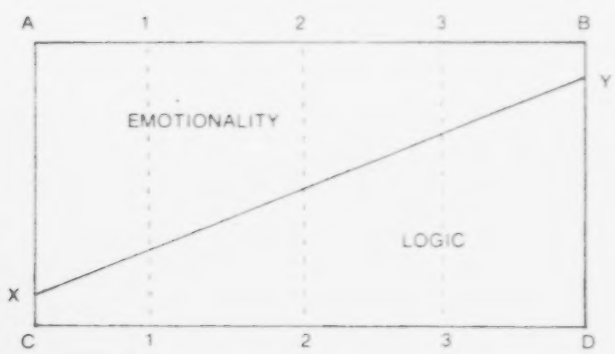
A. **Interpersonal Skills** — The core of this leadership skill area is simply whether or not the special education leader can get along with others. Whether the individual's leadership style is autocratic, democratic, or laissez faire is not as important as is the honesty and integrity with which the administrator or supervisor interacts with subordinates, peers and superordinates. The abilities to really listen, to consider others as human resources, and to be accepting and supportive of a wide ranging array of rural cultures, mores, and customs are important aspects of interpersonal skills.

B. **Negotiation Skills** — Life is a constant negotiation. Since everything in life is on a continuum, most people, including all school leadership personnel, constantly vie for a position on the continuum. While some can acquire certain resources for their programs by virtue of brute force (e.g., having the superintendent as a relative, marrying the budget director, etc.), most special education leadership personnel will find that they can attain reasonable resources for their programs via negotiations. By this we do not mean formal and adverserial negotiations as have become popular with unions and management. Rather we mean on-going interrelationships among administrators wherein the overall intention is to bring about the most good for as many children as possible.

C. **Creativeness** — Outstanding rural special education leaders are usually creative individuals. They have adopted Axioms #I and #II and have learned to adapt, modify and otherwise use resources in untested ways. A comment by one of the local "good ole boys" that, "That's never been done before," usually serves as an indicator that (a) it's never yet been proven wrong, (b) it is, therefore, an interesting alternative, (c) the special education leader had better have keen negotiation skills, and (d) the idea will probably work. Creative leaders will make mistakes. Creativity might be manifest in the way the leader gets people involved, uses resources, acquires funding, allocates space, develops programs, etc. Successful creative leaders will continue to make attempts.

D. **Logical Abilities** — Figure 3 replaces A Factors and B Factors with Emotionality and Logic.

Figure 3



While an administrator will occasionally win a point or be successful in an argument because of an emotional appeal, the skill of rational thinking and the use of logical argument will ultimately (or usually) prevail. Note that even on this continuum the successful administrator will still involve some degree of emotional appeal, whether it is contained in an emotionally laden statement or in the tone of voice used to illustrate different points. The special education leader who can negotiate creatively and logically is a definite asset to any rural special education program.

E. **Self-Confidence** — While self-confidence might be thought of more as a characteristic than as a skill, it is a condition that can be developed. Numerous motivational programs, clubs, and books focus on the development of self-confidence. Rural special education leaders who exude self-confidence will be accorded more respect and authority than will those who lean more toward meekness and groveling. Here too, however, the Law of Non-Absolutes prevails—self-confidence could be perceived as unwarranted cockiness at one end of the continuum while meekness and groveling could be used as an acknowledgement of an inappropriate job placement. People who are confident in their abilities, their programs, their ideas and knowledge are better for special education that are leaders who lack this quality.

F. **Assertiveness** — This characteristic, which can be developed as a skill, is much like confidence in that it is better to have this ability than not. Special education leaders who are assertive will garner more glory for their programs than will special education leaders who meekly accept what seem to be givens and who don't act on the Law of Non-Absolutes. Assertiveness is a skill which can be developed and is one who commands attention and respect for an individual. Being assertive without being aggressive includes elements of other leadership skills such as interpersonal, negotiation and communication skills. Aggressive special education leaders are typically fired while assertive ones are promoted or hired by larger school systems.

G. **Proactive Planning** — Thinking and planning ahead are usually considered to be positive leadership functions. A proactive special education leader will monitor the environment as it affects education in general and special education programs in particular. Proactive leaders learn to anticipate events and design adaptive mechanisms for their programs. Programs with proactive planners at the helm are not faced with numerous "brush fires," and they enjoy the luxury of time to prepare creative alternatives to situational variables.

The opposite pole from proactive is reactive, and administrators functioning at the reactive level never seen to wear the right color of socks. (Additionally, they make hurried decisions, spend budgets without a plan, constantly bemoan what "they" are doing to special education, and usually burn out and return to coaching or supervising transportation after a very limited tenure as a leader of special education in a rural school system.)

H. **Organization Development** — Special education administrators in rural areas need to have skills in organization development if their programs are to become integral elements of the rural school system. This is true by definition since most rural school systems prior to PL94-142 had minimal special education programs. Even now many rural areas are lacking in such special education components as secondary programing and services for children with low incidence or severe handicaps.

One common characteristic of school administrators is "turf" protection. Since the special education turf is usually quite small in rural areas, it behooves the special education leader to expand his or her sphere of influence to include the entire school system. If this is to occur in a positive way, the rural special education leader must be a change agent. The goal must be to bring about system-wide acceptance for participation with proactive special education services. Knowledge of process consultation and other organization development strategies such as conflict management and differentiation and integration are important. The special educator must also know how and when to use internal change strategies and when to bring in external consultants.

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I. **Communication** — Clearly, the preceding eight skill areas of leadership depend on good communication skills for their full actualization. Special education leaders in rural areas need to know how to communicate without alienating, convince without brainwashing, and be creative without seeming Machiavellian. The special education leader should be adept at conducting conferences, capable of consulting with other professionals, and able to discuss and disseminate information through written or spoken communiques.

J. **Self-Renewing Abilities** — This final skill area needed by rural special education leadership personnel is extremely important for successful survival in rural areas. Usually the special education leader has no peers within the immediate school system who have the same level of interest in children with disabilities and delivery of special education services. Rural strategies for self renewal are extremely different from those available to urban special education leaders. For example, participation in cultural activities are usually limited in rural areas, while the availability of outdoor sports and hobbies is probably more prevalent than in urban America. Rural leaders need to give serious consideration to their own self-renewal and that of other special educators within their districts. The ability to maintain the keen edge necessary for optimal development of rural special education programs diminishes as the leader becomes tired and burned out.

The above are the ten major leadership skills needed by rural special education administrators and supervisors. Usually none of these are taught directly in the preservice curriculum, and certainly none are taught with a focus toward rural special education leadership preparation. It is true that we have discussed more human and conceptual skills than technical skills. However, any cetification or degree program can be analyzed to assess the specific competencies required of special education leaders. The leadership skills discussed above are those that are essential for success as a rural special education leader.

II. COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURES

The second dimension (Figure 1) involved in formulating solutions to problems in rural America considers the community and school system infrastructures. An understanding of the ways communities and schools operate, including their historical and philosophical orientations and the ways they are organized and function, is critical. A working knowledge of the following six areas is important because the rural special education leader must be able to weigh them along the continuum of A Factors or B Factors and arrive at valid and viable decisions which benefit special education.

A. Formal Organizational Structure
B. Informal Organizational Structure
C. Communication Networks
D. *Raison de E tra* (justification for existance)
E. Service, Social and Professional Organizations
F. Movers and Shakers

These six structural elements are present in nearly all rural communities and rural school systems, and an understanding of each is mandatory. Although the six infrastructure components are listed separately, it should be understood that they must be considered synergistically. An analysis of the formal and informal structure requires consideration of the communication networking system, of the various organizations, and knowledge of who gets things done. There are numerous other sociological factors to which the special education leader could attend. However, an operational understanding of these six will allow leadership personnel to make contextually relevant decisions and to design and implement strategies with a better-than-ever chance for success.

An analysis of these six variables by a practicing administrator or supervisor is not difficult. However, it does necessitate attention to variables not traditionally included in a program planning and implementation process.

The importance of this kind of study for an individual special education leader is illustrated by the fact that key communicators in rural areas include school janitors, service station owners, and corner store proprietors. The informal organizational structure and the communication networking system assist the movers and shakers in rural areas in maintaining the status quo or in bringing about change as wished. (Typically, movers and shakers are not participants in the formal organization and must be identified through a means other than examining organizational charts. In one rural school studied by the author as part of the unobtrusive data gathering activity for the National Rural Project, the secretary whose desk was beside the refreshment area was clearly the source for information transmission with the school. Even though the formal organizational structure indicated that memoranda, speaker system announcements, and faculty meetings were the primary means of communicating information, faculty members made it clear that the school secretary was their primary source of information, including an analysis of the meaning of memoranda.)

It is clear that an understanding of these variables will assist the special education leader to develop situational specific strategies for accomplishing tasks for children with disabilities. Constant attention to the Law of Non-Absolutes will encourage special education administrators and supervisors to search for creative alternatives for using the above six elements in the best interest of disabled children.

III. RESOURCES

The third dimension of the model in Figure 1 which must be considered in developing solutions to problems of program planning and implementation is the resource dimension.

Traditional resources which most special education leadership personnel have been trained to manipulate include budgets, personnel, time, and space. This paper will not deal with these four resource variables since they are fairly obvious, and it is assumed that special education leaders having the leadership skills discussed above will be able to acquire and use these four resources from traditional sources.

There are, however, six additional resource areas the creative special education leader should consider. These six are external funding, collaboration, community involvement, flexibility, recruitment and retention strategies, and technology.

A. **External Funding** — External funding comes from federal, state, or local sources or foundations, clubs and organizations, etc. Most funds beyond those received by school systems for student membership come from state coffers. However, many sources of funding within states are not tapped by school systems because school personnel typically neglect to explore beyond their state departments of education. The department of health, bureau of social services, department of mental health-mental retardation, and other agencies frequently have funds that can be accessed by local education agency special education programs. One long-term strategy for accomplishing this is for rural special education leaders to become involved in the planning process regarding fund distribution by state agencies. Participation as long-term funding plans are developed will insure that queries to that particular funding agency in the future will not result in the comment, "We are sorry but our long-term plan does not accommodate public school participation."

Similarly, foundations having some involvement with a specific rural area may be accessed by the assertive special education leader. Occasionally, foundations having to do with farming, lumbering, drilling, mining, etc., have holdings (or their parent corporations do) in rural areas. It is likely that these foundations have never been tapped by the local education agency and that they would be responsive to funding proposals.

The Federal Government is constantly changing its funding structures. However, various departments and branches do have a considerable amount of funds available for dissemination to local education agencies.

The primary problems the rural special education administrator or supervisor has in applying for these funds are locating the source of funding and finding the time to prepare fundable (i.e., excellent) proposals. However, through creative delegation and extensive use of midnight oil, these problems are usually not insurmountable.

B. **Collaboration** — Another means for acquiring resources for children with disabilities and their programs is through collaboration with other schools, human service agencies, retired teacher organizations, teacher unions, and other individuals and groups. (In fact, collaborative grant applications are frequently better received than those from individual agencies.) Such collaboration can include synergistically combining any of the primary four resources (budgets, personnel, time, and space) to improve service to the constituent agencies.

Additionally, collaboration emphasizing long-term interaction between organizaitons within a community can reduce redundancies and thereby increase resources available to persons with disabilities in the area. For example, personnel who have handicapped children, youth and/or adults with disabilities as their constituents and who are employed by a university department of special education, local education agency, a state bureau for rehabilitation services office, a mental health/mental retardation care center, or other agency could interface many of their program activities in ways which would provide a full range of services. This same coalition could become involved in the development of state plans as discussed above under External Funding and could apply for external funds emphasizing the value of combining service efforts in a particular community.

C. **Community Involvement** — Another category of collaboration or involvement that is extremely useful in rural areas is working with local civic and social clubs, churches, and other similar organizations and groups. Creative rural special education leaders around the country have involved their community in ways such as the following:

1. A local horseback riding club was recruited to help in developing and operating a "horseback riding for the handicapped" program. Club members volunteered their horses and tack, transported their animals to a local riding arena which was donated for that purpose and then assisted school teachers, mental health-mental retardation agency personnel, and university undergraduate students as helpers in the program.

2. A local four-wheel drive club volunteered to transport children and adults with disabilities to school and social activities during particularly bad weather.

3. A local Lions Club purchased an audiometer and routinely sponsors hearing and screening vision clinics.

Similar examples of community organization assistance are legion throughout the country. Community involvement is not difficult for the accomplished special education leader to coordinate, particularly if he or she has a thorough understanding of the community infrastructure as discussed above.

D. **Flexibility** — The ability to be flexible is usually considered more as a skill or a characteristic than as a resource. However, in this discussion which deals with using all available resources to meet situationally specific needs, it is seen as a definite resource. The special education leader who is not dogmatic, who can creatively change positions on issues without losing the integrity of his or her point, and who can take available resources and combine them into useful programs and services for children and disabilities, is a positive resource.

Flexibility is often required of special educators to any new rural area. Typically, new personnel are filled with "world saving" notions and plans which just as typically run afoul of local procedures, norms, and mores. The inflexible special educator will find living in the rural community uncomfortable and will move on in search of a location more interested in his or her ideas. This probably accounts for some of the 30% - 50% per year attrition rates identified in rural areas (Helge, 1981).

Flexible rural leaders are sought to participate in a wide array of committees, projects, and other undertakings. The inflexible person is shunned and simply not included when decisions are made.

E. **Recruitment and Retention Strategies** — One of the most useful resources available to rural special education leaders is a positive and proactive recruitment and retention strategy. With rural special educator attrition hovering in the 30% - 50% range, the selection of good personnel committed to providing services to children with disabilities in rural areas cannot be too strongly stressed. Sixty-six percent of the rural special education administrators surveyed by Helge (1984) indicated they were having difficulties recruiting qualified staff, and sixty-four percent had difficulties retaining qualified staff.

Recruitment strategies based on the upper levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs have proven to be more beneficial in the recruitment of quality personnel than have traditional recruitment approaches such as salary, class size, or carpeted floors.

Personnel should be sought who have similar mores and cultural ideals to a particular community. Wild-eyed radicals are great in communities that are liberal and which encourage cultural diversity and spontaneity. However, in communities which are conservative and restrained such individuals would likely not last beyond the initial contract year.

Retention strategies should begin at recruitment time. Research has indicated that such strategies as matching new employees with "old timers," developing professional support systems, and arranging for the inclusion of newcomers into community affairs all tend toward enhancing the probability that the newly hired rural special educator will be successful in that community. (Helge & Marrs, 1982.)

Recruitment procedures should include marketing strategies highlighting the positive aspects of the community via videotape, brochures, etc. Mimeographed position vacancy notices mailed to universities do not have the same appeal to job seekers as do telephone calls and personalized letters.

F. **Technology** — The final area of resources to be discussed here is the use of technology. Such technological innovations as computer/video disk interfacing, satellite tv, cable tv, telephone conferencing, and other strategies can be employed in rural areas. While a school system may not have the financial resources to acquire this technology, it is likely that some agency, individual, or organization within the community already has some of these capabilities which could be borrowed for school purposes. Additionally, collaborative planning and grant seeking as discussed above are likely to be fruitful for the special education leader.

Summary

The answer to the question, what is generic about rural special education is, "Very little." To be sure, most problems, when listed by categories such as inadequate funding or recruitment/retention difficulties, are claimed by the preponderance of rural local education agencies. However, to identify the problem as generic and to assume the solution will also be generic is a grevious error. The solutions to the unique problems of rural special education programs are not generic and in fact are extremely diverse. Special education leaders in rural settings across America are individually developing solutions to their problems.

Rural special educators who are successful usually function according to the Law of Non-Absolutes. They are able to integrate the factors contained within the dimensions of the model illustrated in Figure 1 into their ongoing planning and implementation. They are capable of balancing the A Factors against the B Factors. They recognize that, "Everything in life is on a continuum," and, "There is no such thing as a pure model." Therefore, they are flexible, creative, dynamic individuals who understand the community and school structures and can use all of these resources for the best interest of children with disabilities.

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RURAL STAFFING REQUIRES INNOVATIVE PRESERVICE

Rural personnel shortages have been sighted by the Office of Special Education Programs (SEP) as the most acute area of special education staffing deficiency. The reason for shortages in rural areas seems to be a lack of preparation for the special problems faced by rural teachers. Preservice trainers must address this problem by assessing the needs of rural areas and then adapting their programs to fit those needs. Rural cultural differences, geographic problems, funding bases and a multitude of other variables must be considered.

One of the most difficult problems in supplying adequate numbers of qualified rural special education personnel is that of recruiting and retaining above-average students to education programs. Many students are not impressed with a degree in education, so colleges must inform prospective students of the benefits of teaching.

The most appropriate place for colleges to seek students to train for rural special education is in the school districts which suffer from personnel shortages. Research has indicated that "home-reared students" are most likely to remain in their area once they are trained than are newcomers to an area. A successful strategy for motivating students has been sponsoring regional essay contests in which area students research and write on areas of interest in special education. Students' interests are peaked, and quality students are identified through analysis of their writing. Community citizens, agencies and clubs have also been involved by their encouragement of local students who then feel that the community will support them once they finish college. With even small scholarships or awards, local businesses can encourage students to train in the fields where the community schools are understaffed.

Some effective methods of recruiting quality students can also be borrowed from the field of advertising. Special education departments have used motivational movies to "sell" the idea of teaching special education. Computerized slide shows have been developed to run from floppy disks so that students and their parents can have easy access to information on a college's education programs. Disks are effective and inexpensive enough to allow for broad distribution in school counselors' offices.

Universities have set up programs where financial assistance can be given on a priority basis to students training in fields where shortages exist in the school systems. Some programs are described in "Peace Corps" fashion where students train to work in rural areas for a specified time to experience "a different way of life" and have "unique experiences." Students make commitments similar to those made in some medical programs where students who have received financial aid are sent for a time to areas of the country which lack quality professionals. Training in these programs then focuses on how to successfully live and work in rural communities. Prior knowledge of life in rural areas allows these people to better fit into the rural communities where they may decide to stay.

Once students are enrolled in education programs and interested in rural areas, it is necessary to maintain their interest and commitment. One idea that is educationally sound is the idea of frequent reinforcement. A system of awards, monetary and/or honorary, is easy to organize to reward the best practicum student or clinician, an outstanding researcher, the best grades, etc. Student-of-the-month/semester plaques can be circulated so that the students achieve in an competitive atmosphere where the program is seen as "tough" and "the best." Students then feel positive and proud of their education, so they work harder for it.

Course work in these training programs needs to include as many realistic field experiences as possible. Students should be involved in local school programs as early as possible. Some programs involve students with individual disabled students on a long term basis, while others allow students classroom experience for short semester periods. Such programs benefit from community involvement where local people volunteer time and donate money or materials for use in special education classrooms or university projects. Community involvement and actual work with disabled children enhances understanding of local attitudes, communication and power structures. These are important learning experiences for newcomers to rural America.

The National Rural Project (NRP) has developed a series of curriculum models for rural special educators that are being used in universities across the nation. Thirty-five universities from Alaska to New Hampshire have reviewed and selected modules for their faculty use. Curriculum topics range from service arrangements for handicapped children in sparsely populated remote areas to the "state of the art" of rural education.

NRP also collects information regarding preservice programs currently in use to train students for rural teaching situations. The following is a collection of innovative rural preservice programs and their contact persons.

STUDENTS TRAINED FOR EARLY INTERVENTION

Demonstration parent-implemented early intervention programs are provided for children, from 0-4 years of age, and their families in the Upper Cumberland Region of Middle Tennessee by Tennessee Technological University's First Step Centers. The centers are also used for training undergraduate and graduate students in special education in early intervention methodology and parent implementation. Families are referred to the centers where developmental disability certification is determined. After one month, an Individual Habilitation Plan is developed, and parent implemented intervention is conducted from one to four days a week. Data collection and daily recordkeeping by parents is routine, and children attend both individual learning sessions and group meetings. Parents observe to provide feedback and support to other parents. Meanwhile, the graduate and undergraduate students working with the children and their parents gain true-to-life experience.

For more information, contact Dr. Dean Richey, Project Director, First Step Centers, Box 5074, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN 38501, (615) 528-3555.

PARAPROFESSIONALS TRAINED IN RURAL HEALTH CARE

Teachers of disabled students recognize the need in rural areas for more widespread health care systems. In order to have a working system, there must be trained individuals willing to act as facilitators between professionals and the rural families. The Baptist College at Charleston has developed a program to train such paraprofessionals for rural home-family training. The program is designed to target the needs of the student's rural area and then to prepare several educational tracks for exploration by the student in dealing with the identified clientele. Tracks include study in psychological and sociological needs as well as physical, environmental and nutritional aspects of the rural environment. Students explore the various agencies and sources for alleviation of problems so that they may coordinate efforts when addressing the problems in their communities. On completing this two year Associate Degree program, students return to their rural community to evaluate needs and make referrals for necessary changes.

For information on the program, contact Donna Meyer, Project Director, Baptist College at Charleston, Natural Science Division, P.O. Box 10087, Charleston, SC 29411, (803) 797-4203.

COURSE DELIVERED VIA AUDIO CONFERENCING

Rural Education, the statewide instructional unit in Alaska which serves rural areas, is offering AA Degree core courses statewide through audio-conferencing. Six instructors work, some in teams and some individually, to provide students with required courses. Some instructors augment the audio conferences with video tapes. Courses range from Philosophy to Introduction to Education. This program allows students who cannot reach the campus a chance at higher education. For more information, contact: Vin Pelletier, Rural Education, University of Alaska, 3605 Arctic Boulevard #420, Anchorage, AK 99503, (907) 474-6342.

PROJECT PREP RECRUITS RURAL STUDENTS

The Special Education Program at Ohio University received a $45,000 grant for each of three years to be used to improve the quantity and quality of preservice special education personnel to teach the mildly handicapped in rural Southeastern Ohio and other Appalachian areas. The project will recruit undergraduate students with the capability, experience and commitment needed. Each year, 12 juniors and 12 seniors will receive fellowships of $1,500 to prepare for service to the mildly handicapped in rural Appalachia. Preservice training will stress not only the characteristics and needs of the mildly handicapped and how to teach them necessary life responsibilities, but also the special needs of the rural population.

The project is intended to meet the increasing need for qualified personnel to handle the mainstreaming process in rural areas and to decrease the number of persons who receive temporary certifications after PL 94-142 mandated expansion of public special education.

For information, contact the Project Director, Patricia M. Hoess, 102C McCracken Hall, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701, (614) 594-5996.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSERVICE TRAINING

In the Upper Cumberland Region of Middle Tennessee, inservice training is provided by Tennessee Technological University for mainstreaming in physical education classes. Twenty teachers from the region are selected to receive on-going inservice by Project PERMIT staff. (Physical Education Resources for Mainstreaming and Inservice Training.) Inservice is held and materials applied in realistic teaching situations. The staff provides weekly consultations and records the needs of each teacher. Implementation is reviewed and new concepts applied. The teachers receive 30 hours of inservice and stipends of $150 each.

For more information, contact Dr. Rhonda Folio, Associate Professor, Special Physical Education, Box 5074, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN 38501.

ALASKAN TEACHERS TRAINED FOR BUSH CULTURE

The special adjustments necessary for teachers to succeed in communities which are culturally and environmentally new to them are being recognized around the country. In Alaska, 85% to 90% of state teaching certificates are issued to people who transfer their credentials from other states. These teachers, new to Alaska, must make adjustments for different cultures, languages, social behaviors, extreme isolation and most noticeably, a harsh, demanding environment. Newcomers may find that they are not only socially and geographically isolated, sometimes in danger when venturing outside, and struggling for the simplest of daily needs, but also failing with the teaching methods they learned in the "lower 48." The turnover rate for teachers in the Alaskan bush runs from over one-third of the teaching staff, to more than three-quarters in some remote villages. The University of Alaska, Fairbanks, is offering a year-long sequence of three courses and workshops to assist new teachers in adapting to the different values, cultures and environments in Alaska. Two thirds of the Cross-Cultural Orientation Program occurs at the rural teaching post. Some districts have begun to require the program for their new teachers. For more information on the program, contact The College of Human and Rural Development, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, AK 99701, (901) 474-6418.

ADAPTING THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

The University of South Carolina is adapting the Cooperative Extension Service's "Demonstration Agent" system to upgrade the certification level of special education teachers. The project will address the problem of recruitment and retention by hiring and training regular classroom teachers to function as Demonstration Agents in rural areas. Once trained they will provide systematic, long-range inservice to their fellow teachers on how to conduct educational and developmental diagnosis and how to implement individualized programs. Successful service is provided, then, by teachers who know the schools and their unique needs and not by outside authorities.

For information, contact Dr. Gail I. Raymond, Director, Educational Services Clinic, Program for Exceptional Children, College of Education, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. (803) 777-7664.

SUMMER PRESERVICE THROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Severely and multiply handicapped individuals in Cookeville, Tennessee, receive service from Tennessee Technological University in an extension program of the nine month public school program. The disabled individuals attend sessions five mornings a week which are staffed by a certified special education teacher, the project director, volunteers from the community and graduate and undergraduate special education students. Through their work with this Extension Intervention Program, these college students receive in-depth training in special education and in the development and implementation of programs for the severely and multiply handicapped.

Contact: Linda K. Acosta, Department of Educational Psychology and Counselor Education, Special Education Program, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN 38501.

SPEAKER TELEPHONE SEMINAR OFFERED

Purdue University in Indiana is currently offering a 1-2 semester credit hour course via speaker telephones. Participants in the course need not travel to a central location for classes; they simply use a speaker phone hooked up in a convenient room. The phone calls are toll free, and the University also has loaner phone equipment available. The number of registrants per reception center is limited to ensure participant interaction and learning. For information on the project, contact Robert G. Showalter, Associate Professor, Audiology and Speech Sciences, Purdue University, West LaFayette, IN 47907. SpecialNet: PURDUESCH.

UTAH RETAINS RURAL TEACHERS

In order to meet the critical need in rural Utah for qualified special educators, the University of Utah Special Education Department has developed a program, using grant money, to enable persons already teaching in rural areas of Utah to become certified special education teachers or school psychologists. Forty percent of the people teaching special education in the central Utah Education Services Center area are uncertified and teaching on special state authorizaiton. Through cooperation with the State Office of Education and the University's Department of Continuing Education, the Special Education Department is offering courses for certifiction at rural high schools. Certified area teachers act as adjunct faculty for the program and visit participant's classrooms for individual instruction. A major objective of the grant is to develop materials to enable the instruction to be transported to small towns. Information will be exchanged via computers. The program will include research to determine if rural based training is equivalent to campus education and whether employers rank the graduates equally.

For information, contact Dr. R. Craig Pace, Special Education Department, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112.

PRESERVICE COORDINATES WITH INSERVICE

In cooperation with school districts, Brigham Young University has established an inservice program in which student trainees teach classes for a one-week period while the regular teachers attend a faculty workshop. The workshops either meet at a central location in the district and are taught by university personnel, or the teachers meet on the university campus and are lodged on campus or in a nearby hotel. The teachers can receive college credit and the student trainees obtain realistic field experience.

Contact: William E. Allred, Chairman, Department of Secondary Education and Foundation, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84601.

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TEXAS A & M TRAINS FOR HISPANIC POPULATION

Because of the acute lack of bicultural individuals equipped to work with Hispanic handicapped children, Texas A & M University has developed a Special Project Training program for educational personnel at the doctoral level. As a part of this program, students will receive training in assessment and intervention techniques leading to certification as a school psychologist. A critical element in this program is to recruit Hispanic graduate students and professionals from rural and urban settings to enter this Ph.D. program. It is believed that these people will return to the setting from which they were recruited and fill the bicultural/bilingual needs in that area.

Recruitment for the program is done through liaisons between project staff and various educational agencies, colleges and advocacy groups in Texas. The hope is that current students will act as recruiters when they complete the program themselves.

The training in the program consists of coursework providing a broad base of competencies as well as an application of these skills in a fourth year internship setting. The practica sites have been selected due to the large Hispanic population that these districts serve.

The doctoral students participating in the program receive a competitive stipend from the U.S. Department of Education. It is expected that project graduates will assume roles of leadership in colleges and school districts in the Southwest and further disseminate pertinent background and training information to the individuals whom they serve.

For more information about the project contact Drs. Douglas J. Palmer or Andres Barona, Department of Educational Psychology, Texas A & M University, College Station, TX 77843.

COMPUTER MODULES PROVIDE INSERVICE TRAINING

The Center for Educational Experimentation, Development and Evaluation (CEEDE) has developed 16 individualized tutorial modules on Mainstreaming the Handicapped Child. This Computer Aided Instruction for Teacher Education (CAITE) series is useful for both preservice and inservice of regular teachers. The modules are designed for use with an Apple 48K plus microcomputer with a color monitor, floppy disk drive or firm disk drive (Corvus). The Compman II management and record-keeping system is also available. For a list of the modules and prices, contact CEEDE, College of Education, University of Iowa, 218 Lindquist Center, Iowa City, IA 52242.

PRESERVICE PROVIDED FOR NATIVE AMERICANS

An area with specialized problems in preservice preparation is in the preparation of Native Americans. A preservice trainer must recognize the cultural and language differences which may exist between the trainer's cultural background, the background of the college student and the population to be served. Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education is currently funding eleven projects which focus on preparing Native Americans to serve people with disabilities. Descriptions follow of the goals of these projects and contact names of who may be reached for further information.

The first three programs are designed to train paraprofessionals to assist in services to Native Americans. The Indian Oasis School District in conjunction with the University of Arizona is training non-Papago professional staff people in the cultural background areas in which they should be sensitive in order to respond successfully to their students. Involved also in the program is a unit to prepare Papago paraprofessionals to increase their job responsibilities. (Indian Oasis School District, P. O. Box 248, Sells, AZ 85634.) A program on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation has been developed to offer certification and associate of arts degree programs for paraprofessionals in special education and related services. (Dull Knife Memorial College, P. O. Box 206, Lame Deer, MT 59043.) Using resources from New Mexico State University and the Dakota Indian Foundation, a project has been designed which uses paraprofessionals from the existing Navaho Child Development Program. Once trained, these paraprofessionals can then identify Native American preschool children who might have speech-language problems and assist in the needed intervention. (Southwest Communications Resources, Inc., P. O. Box 1199, Albuquerque, NM 87103.)

One of the unique problems special educators encounter when looking for teaching positions is the requirement in many states that special education teachers must have a master's degree for certification. This can be a particularly difficult requirement for some Native Americans, so the following programs have been developed to help meet this need. The Navaho Tribal Program and Northern Arizona University have collaborated to prepare Navahos for certification in special education at the master's level. (Navaho Division of Education, The Navaho Tribe, P. O. Box 308, Window Rock, AZ 86515.) Bilingual cross-cultural preparation to the master's degree has been developed for special education personnel by the University of New Mexico. The languages targeted are Spanish, Navaho, Keres and Tewa. (University of New Mexico, Special Education, Albuquerque, NM 87131.) One program providing training for American Indian master's degree candidates exists in the East. (Pennsylvania State University, Division of Special Education and Communication Disorders, 226B Moore Building, University Park, PA 16802.)

The programs described below train Native Americans for specific and general special education positions. The All Indian Pueblo Council is working with the University of New Mexico to provide both preservice and inservice training for certifiable Native American special educators. (All Indian Pubelo Council, Inc., Division of Education, P. O. Box 6507, Albuquerque, NM 87197.) In conjunction with Utah State University, Navahos are being trained to meet the acute needs of the Navaho population for professional educational diagnosticians. (Navaho Community College, Dine Center for Human Development, Tsaile, AZ 86556.) Native American speech-language pathologists and audiologists are being trained at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. (University of Arizona, Speech and Hearing Sciences, Speech Building, #114, Tucson, AZ 85721.) Students from the Indian community are being recruited into programs which will prepare them to teach emotionally handicapped Indian children. (University of Minnesota, UMD Department of Special Education, 2400 Oakland Avenue, Duluth, MN 55812.) Finally, Indian Special Education Leaders are being trained to establish and deliver services to disabled Indian children at the nine Indian reservations in South Dakota. (University of South Dakota, Indian Education Center, School of Education, Vermillion, SD 57069.)

MODEL FOR RURAL-REUNIFICATION

INREAL, an HCEEP demonstration project, is a research-based intervention prevention model for handicapped children. The child and cost efficacy of the program are based on pre-post test and longitudinal experimental data. Since 1977, INREAL has been an outreach model program providing training and technical assistance at preschool and intervice levels. The original preschool model has been adapted for use in regular school classrooms, resource and pre-academic classrooms and institutional settings for the severely multiply handicapped.

The INREAL Philosophy

The **IN**ter **REA**ctive **L**earning method is a nonlabeling, naturalistic child-centered approach. The **IN** is concerned with relationships among all developmental areas (cognitive, social, motor, etc.) and relationships of the child with the environment (i.e., adults, peers, physical surroundings, etc.).

The **REA**ctive part of INREAL describes a child-centered, nonjudgmental conversational mode. The use of nonverbal and verbal strategies (REActive Strategies) enables the teacher to join the child in the child's level through genuine communication. By joining the child, the adult earns the right to become the child's developmental model and educator.

The **L**earning component of the model is the result of successful INteREActive relationships between child-adult-environment (i.e., INREAL the education is in a communication situation rather than a didactic teaching-instructional mode). The child and the adult are partners in facilitating growth. As the adult learns about the child, the child learns.

The objective in using the INREAL method is to help the child communicate better. The premise of the INREAL method is that communication and not correction facilitates language, cognitive and social growth.

Reunification of Regular and Special Education

The INREAL model addresses many of the problems that are commonly encountered in providing appropriate educational experiences to handicapped children in rural areas. Problems common to many rural areas include: 1) high poverty levels, 2) a low tax base, 3) a lack of qualified special education personnel, 4) geographic barriers, and 5) bilingual populations. The INREAL model emphasizes strengths and assets within the maximum use of all personnel.

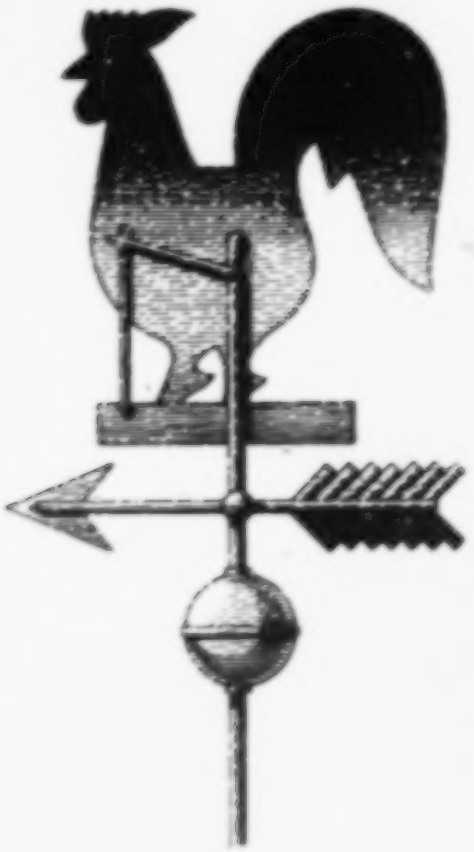
INREAL trains regular and special education teachers, speech-language therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, etc., to become **equal** partners in the intervention process. This is accomplished by providing service providers with skills that can be generalized across handicapping conditions. Thus all professionals involved become specialists in promoting cognitive and social growth.

In addition, since all educators are intervening in a consistent fashion, intervention becomes more focused and consistent. Intervention occurs on a regular basis because the child does not wait for the specialist's visit since the regular teacher is supporting and enhancing what the special education personnel are doing.

The INREAL model also addresses the problems of transporting a model from one rural site to another. Training in the use of the INREAL methodologies occurs on site with both regular and special education personnel trained simultaneously. Because training focuses on the understanding and effective usage of INREAL strategies rather than rigid implementation procedures, each site fits the INREAL model into its existing structure.

The training in INREAL methodologies centers around videotape analyses of each participant's interaction with a handicapped child in the classroom setting. Thus the participants not only gain an understanding and awareness of the model's philosophy but are also trained to evaluate their own use of INREAL methodology.

For more information contact: Rebecca Edmiaston, INREAL Outreach, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309, (303) 492-8727.



NATIONAL PRESERVICE CONSORTIUM WORKING

Close to 100 universities with rural service areas have formed a National Consortium of Universities Preparing Rural Special Educators initiated in 1982 at a meeting in Washington, D.C. the consortium confronts training issues related to the serious difficulties of recruiting and retaining qualified rural special education personnel. Members work together via national meetings, electronic communication, written communication, and telephone. Discussions and problem-solving focus on recruitment and retention of quality preservice students, development and dissemination of appropriate rural special education preservice curricula, problems with transporting students to quality rural practicum and student teaching sites, housing students and supervising faculty, and funding supervisory travel.

Recently a task force of Consortium members met to formulate a plan of action for the creation of the National Rural Education Research Consortium. Plans were made to establish a network through which researchers can collaborate in spite of long distances which might separate them. Through computer networking, consortium members may receive help with research methodology, literature searches, data collection, finding subjects and many other facets of research. The goal of the network is to improve the quality and quantity of rural education research.

If you are interested in discussing innovative solutions to rural preservice training problems and/or in having your institution become part of the national consortium, contact: National Consortium of Universities Preparing Rural Special Educators, c/o Larry Marrs, Dean, School of Education, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

A Collaborative Preservice Program Involving Rural Districts and the College of Saint Rose

Ann Beth Serachan — Daily, senior author;

Richard Medved, Philip E. Lyon,

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Rural Education Grant

The College of St. Rose

Albany, NY 12203

The wide need for programs which effectively implement PL 94-142 mandates is well documented. Although great strides have been made since 1978 to comply with the public law, most models for implementation have been developed in urban areas. According to Cole and Ranken (1981), the programs that successfully mainstream handicapped students into regular classrooms in urban districts are not always as successful in rural districts. Until recently, federal educational agencies have overlooked the differing needs of special education students in rural areas (Sher, 1978).

There are, however, several differences between rural and urban school districts. These differences can pose problems in the delivery of services to handicapped children. Helge (1981) Rural school districts have sparse populations, a lower incidence of students with handicapping conditions, and geographies which inhibit formal staff development programs and informal professional sharing. Negative and uninformed community attitudes toward the handicapped frequently result in less financial and community support for programs for the handicapped. (Junck, Pfaff, and Bowen, 1980). Teachers in rural areas must stretch available resources across many areas of exceptionality as there are often insufficient numbers of students with a single handicapping condition to warrant creating separate classes or programs. According to Latham (1981), services to handicapped students in rural areas are further complicated by transportation factors, high absenteeism, and inconsistent attendance. Another consideration is the high per-pupil cost of providing services to relatively few students (Office of Rural and Human Development, 1976).

Further complicating the delivery of services to handicapped students in rural areas is the difficulty in recruiting qualified personnel. While gathering data for the National Rural Research and Personnel Preparation Project, Helge (1981) found that 94% of the 19 states surveyed indicated that recruiting and retaining qualified staff for educating handicapped students were major problems for rural Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Some states had estimated an annual teacher turnover of 30%-50%, with almost complete turnover every three years.

Sher (1978) suggested that new programs and courses should be created to generate a cadre of teachers prepared for the unique challenges of rural education. These needs and problems of rural educators and of teachers preparing for employment in rural settings form the basis for the action taken by a project funded by a grant entitled "Collaboration of the College of Saint Rose and Chief School Officers to Improve Services to Handicapped Students."

Methods

Located in Albany, New York, The College of Saint Rose (CSR) is surrounded by counties which are predominately rural in nature. Using the New York State Education Department's public school enrollment figures for 1981-1982 and their publication, "School Districts Classification by Community Type," 15 rural school districts located within Columbia, Rensselaer and Greene counties were selected to participate in the project. Five target school districts from each county were selected. Each county is referred to as a Region. Specifically, Columbia County represents Region I, Green County represents Region II, and Rensselaer County represents Region III. The five objectives of the project fall under two main goals:

(1) to assist rural Chief School Officers in designing staff development programs which address the problems encountered by district and building personnel in meeting the educational needs of handicapped students in regular classrooms, and

(2) to establish a teacher education program at CSR that produces graduates with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enable them to work productively and successfully with mainstreamed handicapped learners in classrooms within rural areas.

In order to accomplish the goals and objectives of the project, a Needs Assessment Instrument was developed and distributed to the Chief School Officers in the participating districts, to determine appropriate locations, days, times and formats for future project meetings and activities.

On November 9, 1983, an orientation meeting with all the participating Chief School Officers was held at CSR, to review grant objectives, to meet the grant staff, and to examine training priorities. Subsequent meetings were held with administrators from the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and with each Chief School Officer in Region I to follow-up on the November meeting, to further cement their support for the project and to specify inservice training needs for the first Regional Cooperative Meeting.

The first of three Regional Cooperative Meetings was held on March 5, 1984. Rural teams, consisting of Chief School Officers and high level administrators from each of the five districts in Region I met with administrative representatives of the BOCES, grant staff, grant consultants, and CSR Rural Task Force members. The CSR Rural Task Force was formed from Education Division volunteers, and it consists of eight faculty, one representing each of the education programs at CSR: Communication Disorders, Educational Psychology, Elementary Education, Reading, Secondary Education, Special Education (Undergraduate Programs) and Special Education (Graduate Programs), plus the Student Teaching Coordinator. Additionally, the CSR Rural Task Force has two graduate student representatives. The agenda consisted of the following major topics: Mechanisms for Rural Inservice Activities Through BOCES; Working with the Learning Disabled Student at the Secondary Level; Mechanisms for Rural Inservice Through the Use of Consultants; and a Task Force Activity, where the CSR Rural Task Force met with administrators from the rural school districts to brainstorm preservice educational needs. Subsequent Task Force meetings will be held to examine ways in which CSR can improve the attitudes, knowledge and skills of its preservice education students in working with handicapped children in rural areas.

During a major workshop on June 1 and 2, 1984, representatives of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES), met with teams of rural administrators and board members to examine the issues related to rural special education, the identification of inservice needs in rural areas, and strategies for the delivery of inservice education in rural areas. The following day, they met with CSR faculty, Rural Task Force members, preservice students, and teachers from the participating districts, to consider the issues of mainstreaming in rural special education.

In order to meet the staff development objective, a model will be employed whereby each participating school district in Region I will receive consulting services in Fall, 1984 to aid in their planning and implementation of inservice programs for improving the delivery of educational services to handicapped children in mainstreamed settings within their districts. A Region II Cooperative Meeting will also be held in fall, 1984. Its format and content will be similar in scope to that held for Region I.

The 1985 schedule includes a spring meeting at which Region II school districts will receive consulting services, and Region III will have its Regional Cooperative Meeting. In fall, 1985, Region III will receive consulting services. As a part of the model, the Regions will also receive student teachers and rural interns from CSR.

Concurrently, during 1984-1985, the CSR Rural Task Force will be examining input received from the Rural Cooperative Meetings and will be making recommendations to the various CSR education programs. Recommendations will focus on attitudes and knowledge and/or skills needed by preservice teachers who may be serving handicapped students in rural areas. The grant staff has been surveying the CSR Education Faculty and the rural school administrative teams in regard to knowledge and attitudes toward handicapped children in rural areas and will conduct an analysis of pre-and post-project differences.

Results

The grant has been successful in its role as a catalyst and facilitator of inservice training to Chief School Officers in these rural areas and in developing a productive relationship with the BOCES Special Education Training and Resources Center (SETRC) which, in New York State, is mandated and funded to provide inservice training to teachers in the area of educating children with handicapping conditions. The result was joint sponsorship of the June workshops. Consistent with the grant objectives, CSR will provide teams of rural administrators and policy making personnel with information which will help them to become better consumers of inservice. The project has served as a catalyst for BOCES/SETRC to co-sponsor an inservice education program for teachers in the participating rural school districts, and CSR will award each participant with a Continuing Education Unit for their attendance at the workshop.

Another major grant outcome has been the formation of the Rural Task Force. Members of this task force, representing each of CSR's seven education programs, have met with rural team members to explore ways to improve the delivery of preservice education to teachers involved with educating handicapped children in rural areas. Improving attitudes toward rural education, developing an understanding of rural communities, and obtaining a sensitivity toward rural problems have tentatively been identified as areas for concern in future preservice. The project has also generated baseline data on knowledge and attitude variables of CSR Education Faculty and rural school administrators. Additionally, it has provided Chief School Officers from Region I with sets of available resources, addressing issues related to rural special education. Finally, it has generated mechanisms and procedures for surmounting many problems associated with delivering services to rural school districts which are spread over a large geographic area.

A variable which has posed a problem for the project has been the difficulty in developing rural administrative teams, including school board members. In these rural areas, Chief School Officers generally have no supporting administrators except for the building principals. In some school districts, the Chief School Officer is also a building principal. Consequently, when the Chief School Officer leaves the district to attend a grant function, there are no other administrators remaining to run the district or the building(s). Often, the chair of the Committee for the Handicapped serves in two capacities, as chair of the committee and as building principal. Similarly, the curriculum coordinator may be either a building principal or a classroom teacher. School board members have limited time available, and some Chief School Officers have political concerns regarding the participation of their school board members in the grant. Although we feel that the participation of complete administrative teams is important, due to their policy making status, total involvement of administrators and school board members on teams have not been as easy as we had thought.

Conclusion

Having experienced both the "agonies" and the "ecstacies" of our first year, we look forward to our second grant year. Overall, we have succeeded in capturing and maintaining the interest of 15 rural school districts. Working cooperatively with the BOCES/SETRC network, the grant has served as a catalyst for rural special education inservice. Additionally, the CSR Rural Task Force has started meeting as a group, and it has already met with Chief School Officers and administrators from Region I. Mechanisms are in process for placement of student teachers and rural interns in the participating districts. We are still dealing with the problem of developing our rural administrative "teams." We look forward to working with the LEAs in Regions II and III and to developing alternative strategies for the inclusion of school board members as active participants in the rural teams.

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TASH SEEKS FILMS

The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH) is seeking films for viewing in the Media Room of their Eleventh Annual Conference this November in Chicago. Films or videotapes should be about training or service programs, or humanistic documentaries about the lives of people with severe disabilities. For a $75.00 fee, productions will be shown in the Media Room and written up in the Conference Program, along with a description and rental/purchase information. For information, apply before September 15, to: Hiroko Roe, Conference Coordinator, TASH, 7010 Roosevelt Way N.E., Seattle, WA 98115, (206) 523-8446.

PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGIES

Identified by the NRP

Although the NRP strongly advocates individualized problem-solving, strategies NRP research identifies as potentially generic are described in this publication. In the left hand column are listed a number of identified needs, and in the right potential strategies which may provide solutions to meet those needs and school personnel presently using the identified strategies.

NEEDS	STRATEGIES
Office, building, transportation materials	A nonprofit organization now acts as a clearinghouse for donated industrial surplus which can be obtained by all recognized schools and other nonprofit organizations free of charge. Members pay dues to receive bimonthly bulletins which list the available materials and gifts-in-kind. For more information, contact: The National Association for Exchange of Industrial Resources, 550 Frontage Road, Northfield, IL 60093, (312) 466-9111.
Expanded curriculum for rural areas	Correspondence courses from approved schools are used to expand the courses available for the high school students in Liberty School District, Spangle, Washington. The school finances the tuition costs and provides a "correspondence class" with faculty supervision so that students' progress is monitored and tutoring is available. The 180 students in the high school have expanded the courses offered from 15 electives to over 100. For more information, contact the Liberty School District, Spangle, WA 99031.
Immediate support for new parents of children born with disabilities	Inform doctors of the importance to new parents of children with disabilities to have immediate contact with another parent of a disabled child. Doctors in rural areas know which families have children born with special needs, and they can serve as a relay to get these families who can help each other together. Contact should be made within the first few days of the birth or identification of the child with the disability so the new parents can learn from other parents what help is available and what the child's needs may be.
Training for regular teachers to work with students with disabilities	The regular classroom approach is used to train regular education teachers who have decided to work with mainstreamed handicapped students in the Las Vegas City School District. A graduate course in special education was planned by university personnel to offer a three-hour credit course to the regular education teachers involved. The course was given in the summer with a practicum in which during which university personnel visited every two weeks to supervise the regular teachers working with the children in their classes. For more information contact Dr. Edward Kelly, Director, Project SPECTRE, University of Nevada at Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nv 89154.

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CONFERENCE TAPES ADDRESS PRESERVICE PROGRAMS

NATIONAL RURAL PROJECT
CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

At the Fourth Annual ACRES Conference held in March 1984, audio tapes were made of all presentations. Several of these tapes should be helpful to those interested in preservice programs. The titles and ordering information are below.

- # 5 Field-Based Preservice Creating Equity for Cultural Minorities.
- #21 Field-Based Personnel Preparation for Native Americans, including Telecommunication.
- #23 Training and Placement of Related Services Personnel: Practices in Rural Areas.
- #24 Informal Exchanges Between Rural Parents and Program Directors and Carol Inman.
- #30 The Living Learning Center: A Town-Gown Relationship.
- #40 Use of a Locally Operated Electronic Bulletin Board and 'E' Mail System for Inservice Education Consultation and Electronic Practicum.

Tapes are $8.25 per tape and are available from Convention Record, 809 Glenbarr Place, Louisville, KY 40203. Tapes were recorded live at conference sessions. Group discussions and presentation styles affect quality of these professionally recorded tapes.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: RURAL TRANSITION PROGRAMS

RSEQ

FIFTH ANNUAL NATIONAL RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE TO BE HELD

March 19-22, 1985
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington
See page 12 for details

The **Rural Special Education Quarterly** has been published since the Fall of 1979 as the **National Rural Project (NRP) Newsletter.** The **Quarterly** is still produced by The National Rural Project and will continue to feature up-to-date information on issues regarding services to disabled individuals in rural America. The subscription remains $12.00 per year.

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RURAL TRANSITION PROGRAM NEEDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

By Doris Helge, Ph.D.
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The U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has established a national priority on improving the transition from school to working life for all individuals with disabilities. During 1984, the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) conducted a national study of transition programs for rural students with disabilities. Programs in 100 geographically representative rural areas were examined and serious needs for appropriate transition programs were identified.

Of rural students with disabilities who had left high school, only a small minority were in post-high school job training programs (14%) or in integrated employment settings (23%). The largest percentage, 63%, of rural students with disabilities who had left high school had been placed in segregated settings such as sheltered workshops, group homes, their parents' homes, or institutions.

The percentage of rural students with mild handicaps who, without additional training or services, were felt to be unable to support themselves over the course of their lives was 26%. As anticipated, the severity of the situation escalated with increased disability. Forty-nine percent of rural students with severe handicaps were felt to be unable to support themselves over the course of their lives without additional training or services. Unfortunately, only 58% of the rural communities surveyed had a job training program for disabled individuals who were no longer in high school yet in need of additional training to become employable. After leaving high school, less than half (45%) of rural students with disabilities were involved in job training programs. Only 30% of the respondents had joint programs between schools and businesses designed to aid individuals with disabilities.

When asked to rate the rural community's attitude concerning the employability of citizens with disabilities, it became clear that the potential of such individuals was underrated. The more severe the disability, the more negative was the attitude toward employability. On a 5-point scale where 1 equaled absolutely not employable and 5 equaled always employable in some fashion, rural students with mild handicaps rated 4.03, moderate handicaps, 2.82, and severe handicaps, 1.49.

Respondents were asked to rate problems their rural communities faced in getting students with disabilities into job-related placements. Five problem areas stood out — work available, adequate finances, transportation, volunteer involvement, and placement personnel. Work available in sparsely populated rural areas was clearly the foremost problem.

These findings serve to emphasize the serious significant national problems related to transition from school to working life for rural students with disabilities. To summarize the current status of rural transitional programs for disabled students, the following points are presented.

Rural communities typically lack appropriate transition services. Schools typically have inadequate vocational training or training programs and do not integrate special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation. Most rural vocational programs focus on mild/moderate handicapping conditions or segregated placements such as sheltered workshops. Most rural communities have few role models of successful workers with disabilities.

Adult service agencies are frequently non-existent in isolated rural communities, and regional outreach efforts of agencies such as vocational rehabilitation are typically inadequate. Centers for Independent Living are not found in rural areas, and in most instances, they would be an inappropriate model because of the sparsity of population. Many of the emerging transition models such as clustering disabled individuals in supervised groups within an industry are also inappropriate in rural areas due to the low incidence of handicapping conditions and lack of industries and other employees.

While parents of rural students with disabilities are generally involved in designing individual education plans, partnerships between rural parents, potential employers, and schools are unusual. Unique rural resources such as the "sense of community" and the drive to "help one's own" have not been capitalized upon.

Rural businesses lack knowledge and motivation regarding hiring individuals with disabilities. The majority of rural industries and other businesses are typically small, and their leaders are unaware of tax and other incentives to hire those with disabilities. Most personnel directors and managers do not know how to test or train severely handicapped applicants for work abilities and are unaware of resources available to assist with employment of individuals with disabilities.

Models of effective transition are emerging for urban areas. Through partnerships of rural school personnel, parents, community groups, and business representatives, the serious needs for appropriate rural transition programs can be addressed leading to the development of effective transition models for rural communities.

For further information regarding the study reported in this article, contact the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES), Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

EXCERPTS FROM "BRIDGES FROM SCHOOL TO WORKING LIFE"

By Mrs. Madeleine Will
Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Washington, D.C.

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services has established a national priority for improving transition from school to working life for all individuals with disabilities. Transition from school to working life has been defined as an outcome-oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment. The transition from school to work and adult life requires sound preparation in secondary school, adequate support at the point of leaving school, employment opportunities, and services, as needed, in adult situations. The definition emphasizes shared responsibility of all involved parties for transition services and extends beyond traditional notions of service coordination to address the quality and appropriateness of each service area. Three assumptions underlie OSERS programming for transition: the need for complexity in post school services in order to meet individual circumstances and needs; the need to emphasize the commitment to all students with disabilities, be they graduates of special education programs or the regular curriculum; and the use of employment as an objective measure of transition success.

As programming for transition involves using different kinds and amounts of support with different individuals, a conceptual model has been formulated by OSERS. The five part model includes the high school foundation, transition without special services, transition with time-limited services, transition with ongoing services, and the employment foundation. The model is useful in both organization and evaluation of transition effectiveness.

A broadly based strategy of research, development, demonstration, and replication will be used to address improvements in all aspect of high school services. Particular interests include cooperative vocational education and vocational rehabilitation programs, school vocational preparation program improvements in community based job training and placement, and service models allowing regular and frequent contact with non-disabled peers.

One of the most important initiatives in assisting students to make the transition without special services relates to post-secondary education. OSERS is particularly concerned with stimulating research and program development for persons with learning disabilities and other mild educational handicaps. With reference to time-limited services, cooperative relationships between special education, vocational rehabilitation, and vocational education can facilitate vocational planning and smooth changes in service responsibility. Strategies for promoting innovations in on-site job training and placement programs will be developed. To improve employment with ongoing support, OSERS has developed an employment initiative shifting from day activity programs to work alternatives. Competitive grants to interested state agencies will be offered. Cooperative initiatives with other agencies will be involved in efforts to improve employment opportunities. OSERS is particularly concerned with developing a broader range of incentives to employers. In addition, broad research and evaluation issues are important. Additional research on current transition experiences is needed as well as an adequate evaluation of the entire transitional model.

OSERS programming for the transition from school to working life will offer federal leadership to state and local efforts to improve the lives of young adults with disabilites. Federal activities will focus on disseminating effective practices, providing asistance to states, and building the capacity of the professional community to deliver improved services.

This article was excerpted from: Programs for the Handicapped. Washington, D.C. **Clearinghouse on the Handicapped**. Mar./Apr. 1984. Number 2.

PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGIES

Identified by the NRP

Although the NRP strongly advocates individualized problem-solving, strategies NRP research identifies as potentially generic are described in this publication. In the left hand column are listed a number of identified needs, and in the right potential strategies which may provide solutions to meet those needs and school personnel presently using the identified strategies.

NEEDS:

STRATEGIES:

Expanded Rural Vocational Education

Vocational Instruction for Rural Students with Disabilities

Rehabilitative Engineering Equipment Assessment and Training

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NEEDS	STRATEGIES
Career Planning	
Information Dissemination Regarding Transitioning	
Vocational Education Realistic for Local Employment Needs	
Modules for Vocational Education	

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EXEMPLARY RURAL TRANSITION PROGRAMS

VOLUNTEERISM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION THROUGH INDUSTRY-EDUCATION COOPERATION

The National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation provides leadership in developing effective joint industry and education efforts to implement policy and programs aimed at helping youth acquire employable skills, work attitudes, and an understanding of our economic system. Under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, private sector volunteers are being prepared to become actively involved in the education of handicapped children and youth through a networking system of industry-education partnerships. A training package will be produced and utilized in training workshop sessions conducted at selected sites throughout the nation over a three year period. The key training material will be a handbook which will describe the principles, advantages, processes, and techniques for involving industry volunteers in special education programs and services. For further information contact Dr. Donald M. Clark, Special Education Project Director, National Association for Industry-Education Cooperative, 235 Hendricks Blvd., Buffalo, NY 14226.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS (VESS)

This program provides for specific job training skills in a given occupational area for students aged 17-21 who are mildly handicapped and enrolled in secondary special education programs. Special needs students are mainstreamed into a vocational course. They develop competencies outlined by the VESS coordinator and vocational instructor. Training plans are developed and tailored to the individual needs of each student. Materials available include special education commercial materials and teacher prepared materials. For more information, contact Jim Sands, Supervisor, Special Education Instructional Programs, Arrowhead Area Education Agency, P.O. Box 1399, 1235 5th Avenue South, Fort Dodge, IA 50501, (515) 576-7434.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Career Development Program involved individual academic programmings in job and living skills along with recreational skill development and in-school/out-of-school sampling and placement. The target population is students aged 14-21 with handicapping conditions. Students are evaluated both academically and vocationally. Job and living skill-oriented materials are used. Precision teaching drill practice materials, and a computerized program are used to develop individualized skills in learning centers. For more information, contact Dr. David N. Sapp, Director, GST, Multidistrict Educational Services, Box K, Hillsboro, ND 58045.

PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL/ DIVERSIFIED OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING

This program, located in Florida, was developed to link special education and vocational education. Students involved are selected because they (1) have vocational aptitude or are at least 16 years of age, (2) are a special needs student, and (3) have successfully completed a formal or informal work experience. A two-day vocational evaluation is administered to determine each student's interests and aptitudes. Guidelines are specified regarding what counts as "prior work experience." On-the-job training, in accordance with JTPA regulations, are provided to successful students. Students may work part-time or full time. Individual training programs vary in length. Most are from three to six months long. For more information, contact Diana Page, Program Coordinator, Judy Andrews Center School for Exceptional Student Education, 129 N. Merritt Street, Pensacola, FL 32507.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR HANDICAPPED: PROJECT WEST (WORK EXPERIENCE, STUDY, AND TRAINING)

This program involves classroom study in career awareness and exploration, job orientation activities, and personal management. It also involves regular vocational classes with or without modification, work experience programs, and a sheltered workshop. Students are evaluated using skills and manipulative tests, aptitude tests, and a rating scale used by the coordinator and employer. Materials available include a brochure and information packet. For more information, contact Barbara Nelson, Director of Special Education or Joe Edmondson, Coordinator of S.E. Vocational Education, P.O. Box 190, Whiteriver, AZ 85941.

A WORK STUDY PROGRAM: KIDS FORM THEIR OWN COMPANY

This program was developed for and by a group of students who needed to develop increased time on task as well as vocational skills. They formed their own business focusing on "odd jobs," such as raking lawns, moving furniture for senior citizens, and taking down storm windows. The charge for their labor was $1.00 per hour. This program focuses on students who do not have an attention span long enough to maintain a steady job in the community. For more information, contact Spencer Gartin, Work Experience and Study Coordinator, Northeast BOCES, Haxtun, CO 80731, (303) 774-6143.

PROJECT Y.E.S. (YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS)

This program of diversified occupations provides basic skills training for known jobs in the community and develops necessary social and personal skills to maintain job placement to students aged 14-21 who are EMR, LD, ED, or physically handicapped. The evaluation process includes data compiled on job placements, state vocational education reviews, state special education reviews, and reports to the state board of education. Materials available include the list of various published materials and films used. For more information, contact Cliff Hall, Director, Lake Regional Vocational Tech. Center, or Cal Chaplin, Program Coordinator, Bridgton, ME 04069.

COMPUTER SKILLS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

This program, located in Georgia, serves 12 youth aged 16 to 18 who are visually impaired. The students are provided with classroom instruction in computer operations and occupations. Computer science consultants instruct the students, and a consulting psychologist provides student counseling and evaluations. After completing the program, the students are placed in on-the-job training. For more information, contact Ms. Faye Mullis, Education Supervisor, Georgia Academy for the Blind, 2895 Vineville Avenue, Macon, GA.

MOBILE VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

This program involves a van equipped with vocational assessment tools which travels to 22 schools. Data are collected on students at three levels then integrated into written evaluations, and are also used in deciding goals, objectives, and placement. Materials available include "Three Level Assessment Model-Commercial Work Samples," and "Vocational Program Components and Sequence Charts." For more information, contact Bennie H. McKay, Supervisor of Vocational Education, P.O. Box 599, Rayville, LA 71269.

MULTI-SKILLS PROGRAM, LYCO COUNTY, PA BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM, IEOGA COUNTY, PA

These programs provide basic training of a "hands on" nature. Students who are secondary level EMR, LD, physically handicapped, partially sighted, hearing-impaired, or TMR, are mainstreamed into regular vocational programs or placed in the Community Exploration Program where they are rotated through six 3-week training stations of their choice. Students are evaluated with checklists by instructors and participating employers. Materials available include a brochure which gives a program description and checklists. For more information, contact Ivan Dineps, 1219 Clayton Avenue, Williamsport, PA 17701, (717) 323-8441.

COMMUNITY BASED VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

This program is designed to facilitate assessment within the community of job seeking, job keeping, and job preferences, and of community based vocational training used to facilitate student transition from secondary programs to work or post-secondary training. Students are evaluated in three areas during the training stage. These areas are (1) content knowledge, (2) performance, and (3) general employability skills. Students are continuously evaluated during the assessment phase. Materials available include learning packets and process inservice. For more information, contact Brad Riley, Supervisor, Work Experience Programs, Green Valley Area Education Agency, Green Valley Road, Creston, IA 50801, (515) 782-8443.

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EXEMPLARY RURAL TRANSITION PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

MAKING SPECIAL FRIENDS: FACILITATING SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND INTERACTIONS

Burlington's Making Special Friends Project is a joint effort of the Burlington Public Schools and the Center for Developmental Disabilities at the University of Vermont. The goal of Burlington's Making Special Friends Project is to develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate a model for providing innovative educational services to severely handicapped learners within the Burlington, Vermont public schools. The model was designed to facilitate social integration and interactions between severely handicapped persons and nonhandicapped peers and adults.

The project's three major components are the In-School Social Integration, Community Integration and Parent Involvement Models. The In-School Social Integration Model is primarily concerned with facilitating social interactions and integration within school settings. The Community Integration and Parent Involvement Models are concerned with facilitating social interactions and integration in general community settings (e.g., grocery stores, restaurants) and the learner's home and neighborhood, respectively. The models were designed by task forces of teachers, parents, support staff and project staff. Monographs describing the models and implementation strategies are available at cost.

For information contact: Center for Developmental Disabilities, 499C Waterman Building, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont 05405.

JOB TRAINING PLAN

The staff members of this plan are oriented towards the needs of those with disabilities and include several persons with vocational rehabilitation backgrounds. Employment and training services are targeted towards high-needs groups. The program is financed by a number of organizations. For more information, contact Richard J. Bird, Executive Director, West Central Wisconsin Private Industry Council, P.O. Box 248, Menomonie, WI 54751.

THE CAREERS PROJECT

The Careers Project is an effort to increase the awareness of vocational educators, counselors, and employers of the potential of handicapped individuals to be a viable and contributing part of the work force in Vermont. It involves a large number of state agencies, private organizations, and units of the University of Vermont. Project Personnel from these agencies develop inservice opportunities such as consultation, workshops and courses for regular and special educators, vocational educators, human service providers, employment and training personnel, employers and consumers. For more information, contact Lynn Baker, Chair, Department of Education, Trinity College, Burlington, Vermont.

THE NORTHERN PENOBSCOT REGIONAL PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

This program is designed for students aged 13 to 20, who are mildly to moderately mentally handicapped, learning disabled or mild to moderately behavior disordered. It assesses student skills and potential, provides vocational awareness experiences, and provides experiences which allow for growth in mechanical, emotional and self concept areas. Students are evaluated in five areas: (1) learning comprehension, (2) manipulative and perceptual skills, (3) motivation, (4) personal attitudes, and (5) interpersonal relationships. Materials available include a resource guide on the development and operation of the program. For more information, contact Mr. Brent H. Colby, Director of Special Education Services, Box 250, Lincoln, ME 04457; (207) 794-2751.

VOCATIONAL EVALUATION/ EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The program, located in Wisconsin, serves 25 visually impaired secondary students from six school districts across the state. It provides work experience opportunities and linkages with the Blackhawk Technical Institute. For more information, contact Wayne Sherry, Department of Public Instruction, Bureau for Vocational Education, P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707.

NATIONAL RURAL INDEPENDENT LIVING NETWORK

The National Rural Independent Living Network (NRILN) is assisting rural communities in developing a skills and services network to provide opportunities for people with a disability to live more independently in rural America.

Each participating community develops an Independent Living Network to meet the area's special needs and resources. The system consists of a group of volunteers who will function as coordinators of services and skills and a group of volunteers and professionals who will provide these services and skills to persons with disabilities. Services are provided to individuals with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. Services of the network could also be used for respite care by families with a disabled family member.

NRILN currently has established networks in Alaska, Idaho, Kansas, Wyoming, Colorado, Minnesota, Tennessee, Louisiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and New Hampshire. Additional sites are currently being selected which reflect different topography and population densities within rural America. Communities with potential support and grassroots volunteers from civic associations, corner stores, churches, etc. are selected for participation. The goal of the NRILN is to establish 500 independent living networks by March 1986.

For additional information contact Nancy Rural Independent Living Network, School of Education, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

INDIVIDUALIZED MAINSTREAMED VOCATIONAL INSTRUCTION

An individual work study program is provided to assist each student in meeting specific vocational objectives. The program provides for modifications with the on-line special education and regular education programs to ensure successful mainstreaming of students in school and later in work. The three elements of the program (teacher, student, community) are interwoven to develop the plan. For more information, contact Mel Mangrum, Director of Special Education or Jana Hubbs, Vocational Coordinator, County Services Building, ESD #123, 314 West Main Street, Walla Walla, WA 99362, (509) 529-3700.

TRAINING IDEAS TO HIGHLIGHT RURAL NEEDS.

Teacher trainers are taken on caravans to rural areas to view the situations for which they are training. Workshops are conducted for rural medical professionals to enlighten them about special education needs and services. Training is given to parents of young special education students because such parents will work hardest to change the system so it will be at its best throughout their children's educational career. For information, contact Jerry White, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201, (301) 659-2479.

METHODS OF MAINSTREAMING RURAL SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS.

One consultant is employed to work with 9 schools as a team member with general education, special needs teachers, parents, and administrators in development and implementation of education strategies. Observations and educational demonstrations of methods and materials are used to meet unique learning and behavioral difficulties. For more information, contact Pamela J. Savack, Consultant Strategist, Special Education Services, Walsenburg High School, 335 W. Pine St., Walsenburg, CO 81089, (303) 738-1701.

NEW PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

Acres Rural Inservice Modules

The American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) has developed inservice modules addressing strategies to address rural service delivery problem areas. Topics include the following:

- —Inadequate Numbers of Special Education Personnel
- —Transportation Difficulties
- —Providing Services on a Regional Collaborative Basis
- —Involving Rural Parents
- —Serving Students With Low-Incidence Disabilities
- —Providing Vocational Education Programs
- —Consulting With Other Staff

The modules are available at $20.00 each. (Discounts are given to ACRES members.) If you would be interested in receiving a brochure about the modules, contact: ACRES Rural Inservice Modules, ACRES, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

Conference Proceedings: ACRES Fourth Annual National Rural Special Education Conference

Proceedings are now available from the 1984 National Rural Special Education Conference for $20.00. The theme of the conference was "The Future of Rural Special Education: A Missing Piece in Optimism." Conference strands included cross-cultural learning, models of rural service delivery, family-professional partnerships, inservice and preservice preparation, advanced technologies, transitions between school and work, community living, cooperative regional programming, and serving rural students with severe multiple handicaps. To receive a publications brochure, contact: National Rural Program, Gradert, Washington University, WA 98225.

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GENERAL CONFERENCE SUMMARY, "BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IN RURAL AMERICA"

By Sally Martin
Doctoral Student
English Education
Louisiana State University

On June 28-30, 1984, in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Department of Education held a national conference designed to promote partnerships in rural America between schools and the private sector. These partnerships are expected to relieve some of the funding, personnel and other problems that rural education is currently experiencing. The stated objectives of the conference can be used as a tape by which the success of the conference can be measured. These objectives were to: "bring together constituencies deemed instrumental in developing effective partnerships, examine critical forces affecting education in rural America, explore a range of existing partnerships, and develop strategies and recommend policies to stimulate successful partnerships for educational excellence." The organization, as well as the content of the conference, worked toward meeting the objectives set for this meeting.

Effective teachers organize their lessons so that both large and small groups may address problems in both a general and a specific manner. This conference was also organized according to this teaching method. General sessions provided national and state politicians, national education officials, corporate business leaders and others occasions to speak to participants from their perspective about the needs of rural education, and how partnerships could be found to meet those needs. These speakers spoke on issues from funding to technological developments, from the ravages of rural consolidation to the need for strong academic backgrounds as proper vocational preparation. Smaller meetings, called breakout sessions, were held to allow participants from the same region or similar job status the opportunity to discuss existing problems and make plans for action. The sessions were structured by discussion questions prepared by conference planners. A reporter in each session took discussion notes and wrote a report on ideas and issues addressed during the meeting. Each of these individual session reports was typed, copied and distributed to all conference participants on the day following the small group meeting. Therefore, each conference participant was able to benefit from each small session when attendance at every one was impossible.

Toward the objective of bringing relevant individuals together, the conference planners made nationwide announcements of conference plans. Those interested in attending were asked to apply, and applications were screened to ensure that no state or job status (local educator, businessperson, state department of education employee, etc.) was too highly represented. A serious effort was made to keep the conference well rounded and all states well represented.

Although this may have created some difficulty for all pertinent voices to be heard, rural special education was adequately represented because of the attendance of ACRES members. Almost every state was represented. Participants included state department of education employees, college faculty, national level education officials, local teachers, parents, businesspersons, other social service agency officials and many others of importance. An opportunity was also provided one evening for participants to meet their Congressional representative on Capitol Hill.

The second objective of examining the critical forces affecting rural education was met in every session throughout the conference. General sessions spotlighted a variety of speakers. Secretary of

PANEL SUMMARY "EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AMERICA: POLICY DISCUSSIONS"

On the second day of the National Conference on "Building Partnerships for Quality Education in Rural America," a panel addressed policy discussions on the development of partnerships for educational excellence. Moderated by Ed DeForrest, Director of the Spaulding Youth Center, the panel included: presider, Anne Campbell, former Commissioner of Education, Nebraska and member, National Commission on Excellence in Education; Faith Dunne, Chair, Department of Education, Dartmouth College; Leonard Kunzman, State Director of Agriculture, Oregon; Morris Mills, State Senator, Indiana; and Carolyn Warner, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Arizona. Before a spirited round of questions and answers, each panelist was allowed to give advice from their perspective on how to maintain effective partnerships.

Faith Dunne presented a neat set of dangers, needs and criteria for partnerships. The three dangers she maintained were most damaging to a strong partnership were the existence of different agendas existing among partners. Each partner may have unspoken expectations and plans which may not mesh with those of his partner. The danger also exists that one partner may become the stronger and receive, therefore, an unequal amount of gains, especially if those gains are monetary. The third danger Faith warned of is that of listening to the "experts" who try to tell partners who should do what and what each needs to get from the partnership. Partners may turn to business or government or colleges to receive advice on matters they should decide on their own. These dangers exist and new partnership builders must be aware of them and exclude them in the beginning.

Faith's tips for quality partnership cooperation again numbered three. The first addressed the dangers mentioned above. She warned that each partner must truly be an equal to the other. No one should become a leader to the extent that he can make his gains a priority over his partner's needs. The second tip addressed college faculty involvement. Professors are not most effectively involved by monetary gains, but their real support can be gained, says Faith, by making some personal investment. The third tip called for open access to be available for planning and building the partnership along the way.

Education. Terrell H. Bell opened the conference with a keynote address describing the current diversification in rural demographics from largely agrarian to a more general profile. He cited the strength of small classes and the weaknesses of opportunities in rural schools as a basis for turning to high technology in the search for quality education. Jim Jess, President of the Rural Education Association, spoke after Dr. Bell to call for an end to consolidation as a cure to rural education's ailments. He pointed out that rural is the pervading condition existing in American education, and it must be addressed by specific plans from teacher trainers, federal legislators and all educational planners. The business side of possible partnerships was represented by William Norris, Chairman of the Board of Control Data Corporation. Mr. Norris suggested that current problems in education could be effectively solved by business involvement. High technology and business management, he said, could provide excellence in education within five years. Other general sessions were addressed by Bill Clinton, Governor of Arkansas; James M. Jeffords, Representative to Congress from Vermont and a distinguished panel led by ACRES member Ed DeForrest. (See related story below.) Small breakout sessions mentioned above provided opportunities for participants to meet with others from their region and also with others of their job status.

Exploring the range of existing partnerships, the third stated objective, was accomplished by the presentations of existing partnership programs. Partnership programs from around the nation were identified prior to the conference. Twenty-one of these were chosen to be featured at sessions during the conference. Time allowed for an individual to see only five of these, so abstracts were prepared from each, and the collected abstracts were placed in participants packets. Participants could then choose which five were most likely to prove useful to his/her situation. Partnership programs presented were diverse. While many dealt with vocational training opportunities, another offered university level teacher training to rural residents and others worked to expand curricular offerings in small schools. Rural special education was addressed by the four partnership programs presented by ACRES members.

Those programs were:

- The School Board/School Program Partnership presented by Bernard Harrigan of Rensselaer, IN;
- Vocational Assessment for Special Education presented by Bennie McKay and Gayle Lane Waller of Rayville, LA;
- Maryland's Mid-Shore Special Education Consortium presented by Jerry White of Baltimore, MD; and
- The National Rural Independent Living Network presented by Larry Mairs of Bellingham, WA.

Opportunities were given at the breakout sessions for participants to develop strategies and to recommend policies to stimulate successful partnerships for educational excellence. Since reports were made from each of these sessions and copies were distributed to all participants, actions can now be taken to implement these ideas. At the last general session another opportunity for strategy development was provided when all participants from each state were seated together at tables in the meeting room. Outlines for plans of action were provided so that each state could, through the work of this cadre of interested, informed participants, create a plan for their state to follow in promoting partnerships for quality education in rural America. These plans were written and collected by ACRES which has since organized and prepared these plans for distribution. Implementation of these plans should stimulate the use of partnerships in every state in the nation.

The Department of Education's conference, "Building Partnerships for Quality Education in Rural America," brought together education, community, state and national leaders, businessmen and social service agency officials from across the nation. These participants were informed, their energies enlisted in discussion and problem solving and they shared their ideas and rural partnership strategies. The conference provided a forum for all parties in business/persons, politicians, educators, parents, and other community members — to speak out on how they believed quality education could best be obtained for rural students. This was probably the most important and fully realized objective gained by Department of Education planners.

The two criteria Faith held for partnerships being built were that they maintain a balance between national interests and local needs. Both the national forces and local needs must be attended for partnerships to be effective. The second criteria set was that independent, creative thinking needs to be stimulated to respond to rural needs. No one idea can build the most effective quality education in all of rural America.

Leonard Kunzman spoke next. His priorities for successful education began with educators motivating students to achieve the level of their personal potential. He stated that this motivation should be planned into every educational program, and this planning will then build a program that is educationally sound. He felt that the way to obtain local acceptance of programs was to allow for local control. These ideas interrelate to lay the foundations for good partnerships and, therefore, quality education.

Morris Mills related on his experience with government funding for educational programs. His succinct advice was that funding depends on how the legislature sees the group working with the local program. No money will come to the program that does not cooperate with the community and depend on the community to an extent. He urged that educators look first to the community for its resources before calling on the government for funds.

Carolyn Warner called for some specific actions to be taken for educational improvement. She said that universities need to be forced to assist the teachers in rural schools in whatever ways possible. They should provide accessible resources and avenues for teacher education to those teachers who are in remote areas as well as those in communities immediately surrounding the college. She called for weighted dollars for rural schools to compensate for higher costs in rural areas, and increased efforts to diffuse the myth that bigger is better. Rural schools are successful, she voiced, and people should be made to recognize that. Another change needed is that the Arts and Humanities programs which are available in urban areas need to be used to travel to the rural regions as well. In line with many other speakers at the conference, she called for proper, increased computer utilization.

Questions asked of the panelists helped to reiterate some of the points made above while opening up other streams of interest. When asked how to lure the larger corporations into partnerships in more remote areas, panelists advised the use of shame. Dan Dunning from Oregon asked the panelists to prioritize available resources. All panelists agreed that people were the most important resource and Carolyn added that attitude was a resource in itself that should be tapped. Many other questions were asked and answered, but the most important undercurrent that ran throughout the answers was that people must evolve original solutions to their problems and work cooperatively with whomever in the community can best help with that solution.

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Plans are underway for the Fifth Annual National Special Education Conference which will be held at ACRES' new headquarters in Bellingham, Washington on March 19-22, 1985. The theme of the conference is "The Nuts and Bolts of Rural Special Education." Topics will include some of the following:

- -Rural Special Education Teaching Strategies and Practices
- -Using Advanced Technologies in Rural Areas
- -Rural Special Education Research and Preservice Models and Techniques
- -Development of Transition Programs and Community Partnerships
- -Parent Involvement and Training Techniques
- -Grantwriting Techniques and Strategies
- -Rural Special Delivery Models
- -Special Education Administration in Rural Areas
- -Personnel Training Issues
- -Working in Cross-Cultural Settings
- -Rural Research and Policy Development

Post conference tours to the San Juan Islands and Vancouver, British Columbia, will be arranged through a local agent. More information will be available on this at a later date.

Arrangements have been made with American Airlines to help conference attendees secure the **least expensive fare** to Bellingham. American is offering a Meeting Saver Fare, equal to their Super Saver Fare, with no minimum stay restrictions.

For more information, contact: Conference Coordinator, The American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES), Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225, (206) 676-3000.

"New Life in the Community" is the theme for the Eleventh Annual Conference of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH). This three-day celebration of the diversity of American life will be held in Chicago, November 8-10, at the McCormick Center Hotel.

Over 200 presentations, panels and workshops will provide a major exploration into developing residential services, and will feature a special focus on Non-Sheltered Work Options, Autism, and Early Childhood. Those interested in pluralistic American communities will be well served by this Conference. For more information, contact: Hiroko Roe, Conference Coordinator, TASH, 7010 Roosevelt Way, Seattle, WA 98115, (206) 523-8446.

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Rural Special Education Quarterly

National Rural Project
National Rural Development Institute
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington 98225

Vol. 5, No. 3 Fall 1984

SPECIAL ISSUE:
RURAL FAMILY-PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

This special edition of the **RSEQ** is devoted to effective relationships between professionals serving rural individuals with disabilities and the families of those individuals. Successful strategies of parent involvement, parent training, and sibling involvement are described. Information concerning national and regional parent support groups is also provided.

NATIONAL RURAL FAMILY-PROFESSIONAL TASK FORCE TO MEET

Fifth Annual National Rural
Special Education Conference
March 19-22, 1985
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington
See page 12 for details

The Rural Special Education Quarterly has been published since the Fall of 1979 as the National Rural Project (NRP) Newsletter. The Quarterly is still produced by the National Rural Project and will continue to feature up-to-date information on issues regarding services to disabled individuals in rural America. The subscription remains $12.00 per year.

NRP Director:
Doris Helge, Ph.D.

RSEQ Guest Editors:
Marilyn Condon, Ed.D., and Phebe Schwartz, M.A.

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ESTABLISHING PARENT AND PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE THE EDUCATION OF MORE DISABLED LEARNERS

By Wayne L. Fox, Richard Shutz, Jacque Thousand, and Wes Williams
Center for Developmental Disabilities
University of Vermont
499C Waterman Building
Burlington, Vermont

Vermont is a relatively small, sparsely populated, rural state with a total population of only 518,000 persons. Our largest city, Burlington, has a population of less than 38,000. Vermont is called the "Green Mountain State" since it consists entirely of mountains and valleys. Between November and April we face our notoriously long, cold and snowy winters.

Vermont's small population, geography and weather tend to isolate our handicapped learners and their families. In addition, our more disabled learners are further isolated by receiving their education in regional special education programs. A primary rationale for regional programming is to congregate educational and related services to deliver them more effectively. Of course, regional programs, by congregating learners, also **segregate** them from their peers, their neighbors and their community for a significant part of each school day. As a result, these learners do not have the opportunity to develop normal relationships during school hours with nonhandicapped peers and other members of their community. When school is out, they return home, and when they attain adulthood and "age-out" of our educational system, they also return home. Unfortunately, they return home to a community which has not had the opportunity to get to know and accept them.

Not only are the children in regionalized programs isolated from opportunities for community involvement, many parents of these children are likewise isolated from opportunities for becoming as actively involved in their child's education as they might in the local school. Many families live as far as 20 or 30 miles from the host school and don't get to know the teachers or the other parents.

Given the regionalized special education delivery system, how can community acceptance and integration for our more disabled learners be gained? How can better, more productive parent/professional partnerships be developed? How can the communication and support systems for parents and professionals in rural areas like Vermont be improved? In a search for answers to these questions, the Center for Developmental Disabilities has initiated several programs which have developed and put into action a variety of strategies and tools for enhancing opportunities for parent/professional partnership.

School and Community Integration Project

In 1980 the School and Community Integration Project was funded by the Office of Special Education Programs to improve the quality of education in a regional special education program in central Vermont that served learners from 22 different rural townships. One outcome of the project was the development of what has come to be known as the "Parent Inventory."

Basically, the Parent Inventory is a structured interview conducted by a teacher in the parents' home. It occurs before the IEP meeting and provides an opportunity for parents to share their values and their current and future hopes and goals for their child. This tool provides the teacher with invaluable information for developing a more functional, useful curriculum for each of his or her students. The last section of the Parent Inventory establishes a parent/teacher communication system on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Regular, ongoing communication occurs through periodic notes, telephone calls, regular visits to the classroom, or through a log book that travels between the school and the home.

Parents enthusiastically welcomed the inventory as a vehicle for them to express their needs and wishes; the Parent Inventory has been adopted statewide as a means of improving parent involvement and parent/professional communication in the education of our more disabled learners.

Making Special Friends Project

A second demonstration project, Burlington's Making Special Friends Project, focused upon the social integration of our more disabled learners in their schools, homes and communities. Parents were encouraged to participate to the maximum extent possible in their child's education. For example, the high-school-level program recruited "room mothers" who helped coordinate parent involvement at the high school. Parents also received training and support from the regional special education staff to implement IEP objectives in their home and in their community.

The success of this entire project was based upon parents and professionals working together. For example, in one instance when the parents of an adolescent who was severely handicapped took their son to a local fast-food restaurant, they would first find an out-of-the-way table where they could leave their son while one parent returned to the counter to order their dinner. Under these conditions, the youngster would become agitated, fidget, and make loud noises until the food was brought to the table. Because of his behavior, the son only rarely was taken by the family to the restaurant. When this problem was described by the parents in the process of completing the Parent Inventory, the special education teacher included "appropriate restaurant behavior" as an IEP objective to be worked on in the school, home and community. A picture communication system was developed which depicted items on the menu that the family typically ordered. The youngster learned to use the cards in school, practiced in the community housing the regional program, and generalized the skills to his local restaurant. Now when the family goes to the restaurant, they sit down in the front area, and their son does the ordering for all of them.

A second component of the project, social integration in the schools, focused upon developing opportunities for structured interactions with nonhandicapped peers. Some strategies included peer tutors who were identified and trained to work in the special education classrooms. Peer buddies were also trained to be partners on the school grounds, at lunch, or at after-school activities. By the end of the project, 117 learners had participated as peer tutors or peer buddies. An additional 417 students participated in regularly scheduled activities with the 28 more disabled learners. Over 500 non-handicapped students had opportunities to get to know and learn to accept these more disabled learners. It is unfortunate that these 500 students could not have been students from the more disabled learners' home schools and communities.

One of the most important lessons we learned from the Making Special Friends Project was that parents can and will participate in the education of their children with support from professionals. In an effort to further assist parents to more actively participate in the social integration and education of their children, the Parent Resource Project was developed and funded by the Division of Personnel Preparation, Office of Special Education Programs.

Parent Resource Project

In this project, a parent of a more disabled child was employed to establish a parent-to-parent communication network in the Burlington area. This parent first met with parents of children enrolled in the regional special education program to survey their needs related to becoming more active partners in the education of the children. Contrary to the expectations of the project staff, but probably not to the parents reading this paper, parents did **NOT** identify a need for parent training, counseling, or other kinds of professional intervention. Instead, they identified the need for information! They wanted to know

what services were available to them, how these services could be assessed and how much they cost. In response to the results of this survey, a group of parents, with assistance from project staff, compiled a comprehensive directory of resources available within the county for use by both parents and professionals.

Parents felt a strong need to initiate communication **to** professionals as well as one another. They believed that, in the past, they had been involved in more of a **professional**/parent partnership than a **parent**/professional partnership. A newsletter, "Our Side," written and edited exclusively by parents for professionals and parents, was published. A total of 25 parents have participated in publication. One hundred copies of the first issue were disseminated; 500 copies of the last issue were requested and disseminated, with additional requests still coming in. Topics covered included vocational services, early essential education, residential alternatives, community recreation, and a variety of other issues important to parents and professionals involved with more disabled children and youth.

The Center for Developmental Disabilities had previously produced a summer recreation guide listing summer camps and other recreational activities. In the spring of 1984, a different kind of recreation guide was assembled -- a step-by-step guide for parents to assist in accessing community recreation activities for their more disabled child. The guide contains suggestions and worksheets to be used in identifying their child's recreational needs, selecting alternative community programs, and identifying necessary support staff to enable the child to participate, at least partially, in integrated community recreational activities.

Volunteers for Families

Another project, Volunteers For Families (VFF) was established in 1983 by parents and professionals to provide more direct support to families. VFF assists parents and families of more disabled learners to socially integrate their children into their neighborhoods and communities. The goal of this program is to develop a statewide network of trained volunteers who will advocate for, coordinate and provide services to the families of our more disabled learners.

The first step in establishing the volunteer program is to identify parents and other community members to serve on a Regional Family Services Advisory Council. The purpose of the Advisory Council is to assist project staff to identify, recruit, and train volunteers.

Once the Advisory Council is established, the recruitment, screening, and training of volunteers begin. Parents from the Advisory Council train an initial group of six to eight volunteer "trainers" who, in turn, train additional volunteers. A Trainer Handbook which contains training session agendas, scripts, overheads, and learning activities is provided each volunteer trainer. Each volunteer in training receives a Volunteer Handbook developed by parents, advocates and project staff to address the issues and concerns that volunteers might need to respond to as they join with a family having a more disabled child. Each volunteer in training also is supervised during at least the first eight hours of their interaction with the family with whom they are matched.

Prior to being assigned a volunteer, each family is interviewed in depth to identify their greatest needs and to insure the best initial family/volunteer match possible. In addition, each family requesting volunteer services receives a Family Orientation Packet containing information the family needs to best utilize volunteer services.

Just completing its first year, Volunteers for Families participated in the training of more than 80 volunteers. Responses from families have been extremely positive. Volunteers have encouraged more disabled learners to participate in 4-H activities, aerobic dance classes, local bowling leagues, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

Homecoming

Parent/professional partnership and family support has grown in Vermont despite the regional model which, by its very nature, segregates both learners and parents from the mainstream. To insure integration of more disabled children and youth with their nonhandicapped peers and to increase parent involvement opportunities, it would seem that the traditional, regionalized educational program model would need to change.

A project in its first year, appropriately called "Homecoming," is attempting to change the regional special education model of self-contained classrooms within a host school district to a regional resource model that will support our more disabled learners within their own home schools. To facilitate a smooth transition of the more disabled learners to their "home" schools, a "Homecoming Team" composed of regular and special educators and the target learner's parents has been established in each of the 16 schools served by the regional program. In the Spring semester 1984, each Homecoming Team designed a plan for bringing home one youngster from the regional program for at least one day a week starting the Fall semester of 1984. On that day, the child will ride the regular school bus and participate in school activities within an age-appropriate regular classroom setting.

Regional special educators are being retrained as consultants by the project staff. As regional consultants, these teachers will go with the learner to the home school and consult with the local Homecoming Teams on educational programs, integration issues and anything else that might arise as a concern for teachers, parents or students. One project goal is for each home school to eventually assume full responsibility for their more disabled learners, with the continued support of regional consulting teachers and related services personnel.

The participation of parents on the Homecoming Teams has been extremely significant. Parents have helped both the regular educators and the special educators see the importance of having the target child in the local school. The teachers are convinced that they and the nonhandicapped students in the school will benefit just as much, if not more, than the disabled learner. The Homecoming Teams are excellent examples of parents and professionals working together to achieve the best possible education for our more disabled learners.

An often untapped or underused resource in improving the quality of life and educational services for our more disabled learners has been parents. Through inviting parents to have meaningful input into services and involving them as equal partners, it is possible to enhance home and community integration, more adequately meet child and parent education and service needs, and decrease the isolation of parents and children in rural settings.

For more information regarding various projects or to obtain copies of the newsletters, training materials, resource guides, etc., at cost, please write Mrs. Shirley Dudley, Administrative Assistant, Center for Developmental Disabilities, University of Vermont, 499C Waterman Building, Burlington, VT 05405.

Dear Subscriber:

Western Washington University is proud to be the new headquarters for the **Rural Special Education Quarterly**. The **Quarterly** has established an excellent reputation for its unique blend of practical suggestions for rural schools, teacher educators, and parents and scholarly articles. We feel that Western can add to the **Quarterly**. We are interested in improving services to rural individuals with disabilities and we offer the assistance of the very capable faculty in the School of Education.

I look forward to meeting you in person during the Fifth Annual National Rural Special Education Conference March 19-22 at Western. I am certain that you will thoroughly enjoy the quality of life, beauty, and natural resources in our area and that the Bellingham conference will be the best ever.

Sincerely,

G. Robert Ross
President

SUCCESSFUL RURAL FAMILY-PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

By Doris Helge, Ph.D.
Director, National Rural Development Institute
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington

The involvement of families in educational programs for rural students with disabilities is essential for program success. Families are resources for program follow-through (particularly in summer months) and can supply new information useful to teachers and therapists. Parents and siblings, through involvement, develop more realistic expectations for childrens' achievement. Effective family communication systems increase the level of support for special education in the rural community. Typically, long-term relationships are established because many rural special educators are responsible for a handicapped child for more than one year at a time. Students usually feel most comfortable when there is a close working relationship between parents and school personnel — both of whom they respect.

Problems Involved

Research studies conducted by the National Rural Project and the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) during 1978-84 identified the following factors which frequently inhibit family-teacher interactions in rural areas.

Rural community mores and values are different from those of non-rural areas. Many rural family members are reluctant to become involved with schools because they feel that school personnel are authority figures.

Many rural parents are unaware of their rights and those of their children as per Public Law 94-142 requirements.

Most rural communities lack family resources such as parent support groups or programs.

Vast distances between schools and homes, sometimes combined with inclement weather or impassable roads, impede family and school staff travel. Transportation is also expensive and time consuming for rural parents who must drive long distances so that their child can participate in a quality program.

Adolescents frequently leave home at unusually early ages. Parents lack ownership/responsibility for such children.

Financial concerns are problematic because the expenses of medical attention and specialized equipment are almost insurmountable for most rural families. Hiring babysitters is often impossible.

Quality respite care is frequently unavailable, and the constant strain of caring for a disabled child can cause families to break up.

Successful Strategies

Due to the limited space available for this paper, the following represent only samples of successful rural family involvement practices. Each practice was identified during 1978-84 research conducted by the National Rural Project and the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES). The "Resources" section of this paper explains how readers may obtain more detailed information.

Social Ties

Rural parents are reticent to become involved with the "authority figures" of the school regarding their child's program. Thus it is essential that special educators (and administrators) establish a positive rapport with parents. It is usually easier to do this via a one-on-one contact discussion between special educators and parents regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the child's performance. It is frequently useful to precede such a discussion with a social contact. In fact, many rural districts host non-threatening social events or meetings preceded by a meal. Free babysitting is also an established part of such events in several rural districts in Arizona, and parent willingness to share valuable information with the schools and to follow up educational instruction within the home setting have dramatically increased.

Special educators who become respected community members have the most success with parents becoming actively involved with

the special education program. Even itinerant staff who only visit a community once a month can express a sincere interest in community events and problems. This is especially true if they talk with the key communicators in the community.

Home visits, after sufficient rapport has been established, are invaluable. Typically, itinerant staff, rural interns, or practicum students who accept invitations to visit or stay in students' homes while traveling learn a great deal about the real strengths and stresses of the family and generate the most success for the special education program. Because of this, many districts plan mobile instructional vans traveling through isolated regions with sparse populations of low incidence handicapped conditions. Generally, this also increases the commitment of the professional.

Non-School Personnel

Discussion/support groups led by parents are much more successful than those led by professionals. Rural districts in Maine found that a public service announcement made by a parent stating that he was not affiliated with the school and would like to visit with and possibly assist other parents was particularly successful. The parent groups originally met on their own and later became an integral part of the school's feedback system.

Messages can be sent to isolated rural communities via persons who frequent such areas on a regular basis (e.g., mail carriers, utility meter readers).

School personnel should work cooperatively with other agencies who visit families or provide services to those with disabilities (e.g., county demonstration or home health agents).

Arrange meetings of parent groups with diverse foci and encourage them to share personal achievements/ideas and occasionally have joint projects. Joint advocacy projects are more effective than those of single parent groups.

Inform local physicians which parents are willing to meet with parents who are just learning that their children have disabilities. It is extremely helpful for parents newly experiencing emotions such as shock, grief and hostility to have a parent near who understands these emotions. This is a particularly effective strategy in rural areas where parents (and sometimes physicians) know which families have children with disabilities.

Educate local physicians regarding the needs of parents of disabled children and community resources that are available to them.

Family

The involvement of siblings and extended family members is an asset. This practice also frequently encourages reticent parents to become involved.

Involve families in designing unique special education strategies (e.g., rural orientation and mobility markers).

Technology

Technological devices can be as simple as a CB radio (capable of serving several families in clustered rural areas) or a telephone answering machine. Answering machines offer parents options of listening, at their convenience, to student progress reports and appeals for instructional assistance at home.

Prepared teaching materials to be taught by parents can be coordinated with television broadcasts or telecommunication systems and supplemented by mobile vans or itinerant staff visits.

Videotapes or cassette tapes can be mailed to parents for instructional use or educators for critique regarding a student's progress. Teacher visits and/or counseling via telephone, audioconferencing, or teleconferencing can be supplemental.

Encourage families to use the "Green Thumb Network" menu of CompuServe regarding potential services of County Extension Agencies. Parents with computers could take advantage of this service.

Parent/Community Communications

"Communications books," designed by teachers, can be sent home with children on a daily or periodic basis. Such books offer advice for at home follow-up reports of progress, etc., and can be responded to by parents.

School newsletters (even a one-page mimeographed sheet) should contain articles or suggestions made by parents and a recognition that parent support is crucial for effective parenting.

Rural Family Resources Available from ACRES

Research-based Rural Inservice Modules are available from the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES). The modules address a variety of topics ranging from parent involvement strategies to alternate transportation strategies. The quarterly **ACRES Membership Newsletter** contains a major section devoted to rural parent-professional relationships. The ACRES Family Involvement Task Force involves rural families and professionals in strategies designed to identify potential resources for rural families which have a family member with a disability. The 1985 Fifth Annual National Rural Special Education Conference will include sessions led by and for rural parents which focus on family involvement strategies and effective school-to-work/community setting transition programs for family members with disabilities.

For further information regarding any of these resources, contact ACRES, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

SERVING PARENTS IN RURAL ALASKA

By Linda Griffith
Special Education Consultant
Project SEPTER
218 Front Street
Juneau, Alaska

Special Education Parent Team for Equal Rights (SEPTER) was organized to inform parents of their rights and responsibilities under state and federal special education laws. Designed by the South East Regional Resource Center and funded by the Alaska Department of Education, SEPTER emphasizes training parents to work with the schools in development of appropriate programs for their children.

SEPTER, emphasizing training parents to assist other parents, provides a diversity of services to parents of handicapped children throughout the state of Alaska. Parent training workshops, the **SEPTER Newsletter**, audio-conferences, a statewide equipment exchange, sibling workshops, a comprehensive Parent-Training-Parent Kit, and the Alaska Parent Guide ("Education and the Exceptional Child") highlight the list of activities and accomplishments of the SEPTER project.

SEPTER parent training workshops are held in local communities upon the request of at least six parents. In most rural areas, parents from outlying villages are flown to a central location to attend a workshop. Parents from various school districts, Head Start, an Infant Learning Program, and special education advisory groups have completed the training. Generally conducted during a two-day period, the workshops cover parents' rights and responsibilities, communication techniques, resources, and forming parent groups. Role playing, a film strip or videotape presentation, and discussion are incorporated into the workshops.

SEPTER's goal for the parent training workshop is to provide parents with a base upon which a parent group can be formed. Currently there are eighteen parent groups across the state of Alaska. Two parent groups are incorporated and have reached out into their communities to involve a broad spectrum of the population in their activities.

The parent group, Sitka PACS, Inc., has received a sub-grant from the SEPTER project to complete the **SEPTER Newsletter**. It is published quarterly and is an important tool for parent communication and the exchange of ideas. Parents write all articles and often feature a particular interest area. In a recent newsletter, a Juneau parent interviewed the Alaska Commissioner of Education reporting his ideas and priorities for special education.

On a quarterly basis, an audio-conference is available to parents. Several parents have been trained as moderators and rotate this responsibility for each audio-conference. To structure the audio-conference, parents are requested to submit agenda items in advance.

The audio-conferences have been highly successful with an increasing number of parents participating each quarter. Typically, six to nine sites are represented with one to eight parents at each site. During the audio-conferences, parents have the opportunity to have their immediate concerns addressed. Other parents and SEPTER staff are available to answer questions and offer suggestions during the audio-conference. We have observed that when an important issue is being discussed, it is more frequently the parents who resolve the question rather than the SEPTER staff! During the audio-conferences, valuable ideas and suggestions have been contributed by parents such as the statewide equipment exchange and the sibling workshop.

The first sibling workshop was held in March 1984. Sitka PACS, Inc., hosted the workshop providing not only participants, but housing for siblings from other communities. In addition to the SEPTER coordinator, a school psychologist was available to conduct the sessions. We found this to be a valuable contribution.

OUR SPECIAL CHILD, MICHELLE

By Elvina Turner
Box 205
Unalakleet, Alaska

We are the Turner family, and we have a special child. Our daughter Michelle has Down's Syndrome. I am Elvina, Michelle's mother. My husband George and I have four children. Michelle is 12 years old; Melissa, 10; George, Jr., 8; and Jerilyn, 4½.

The first time we learned that Michelle was a special child was when she was about four months old and Dr. Nakamira did a blood test. Finding out that she had Down's Syndrome really hurt George's and my feelings at first, but we love her like any normal child — no differently. The doctor explained to us what Down's Syndrome is, but most of what we learned was through books that we read and through a special education teacher.

When we were raising our special child, Michelle, we really didn't have anyone — no other parents — to support us at the time. But we have managed all the hardships, hurt feelings, and the worries about what we might have done wrong while I was carrying her.

Before moving to Unalakleet, we lived in Bethel where Michelle had attended school since she was three years old. Sue Angstman was her teacher, and she is the one who taught us about PL 94-142.

When we moved to Unalakleet seven years ago, there was really no special education program there. So George and I started writing letters to Nome, Juneau, Anchorage, and Washington, D.C., to try to get a special education teacher for Michelle. We wrote to find out

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The workshop for siblings of handicapped children focused on developing skills for dealing with school and home issues. Two siblings, one from Dillingham and one from Fairbanks, traveled an entire day by air in order to attend. This first workshop targeted junior high and high school siblings with a short session for younger siblings from Sitka. SEPTER has four sibling workshops planned for 1984-85.

An important function of the SEPTER project in organizing parent groups has been the SEPTER Parent-Training-Parent Kit. The kit, assembled during the second year of the project, contains information on parent rights and responsibilities, communication techniques, resources, and organizing parent groups. The kit, distributed during an intensive two-day workshop, was designed to provide parents with all the information they need in their own communities. Parents from rural communities attend the workshop, are trained in the use of the kit, and return to their communities to assist other parents in forming a parent group. Following the kit workshop, SEPTER conducts workshops in communities and assists with the formation of parent groups. The kit workshop has been a critical part of the SEPTER project, reaching parents from all over Alaska.

In Unalakleet, a model workshop for serving rural parents in Alaska was co-sponsored by SEPTER and the Central School District. One or two parents of severely handicapped children from various villages were flown to Unalakleet for the two-day workshop. Because the native communication style is highly visual, many of the workshop materials were adapted to accommodate that style. In addition, a rural native individual served as co-leader of the workshop with a SEPTER staff person. Having a native parent in a leadership role was a tremendous asset in facilitating the workshop. The native co-leader was instrumental in encouraging participation in role play situations, a highlight of the workshop. The rural native parents seemed to relate to the role play situations and participated enthusiastically. Plans were established to follow the workshop with two audio-conferences with a school representative, SEPTER staff person, and parents from the participating villages. If it is possible to develop and continue this model, it could be a key means of reaching the most rural villages in Alaska.

The SEPTER project, on a grant from the Alaska Department of Education, recently wrote the "Alaska Parent Guide: Education and the Exceptional Child." In writing the guide, designed to provide parents with a useful summary of federal and state laws, the readability level of the completed text was measured. We were astonished to discover the reading level at the post-college, professional level. The readability of the **SEPTER Newsletter**, written by parents, was measured and the book was rewritten to the same readability level. Both editions were published for distribution to parents and professionals. This proved to be a valuable exercise, and we are now in the process of evaluating all the SEPTER materials and are finding many need to be rewritten.

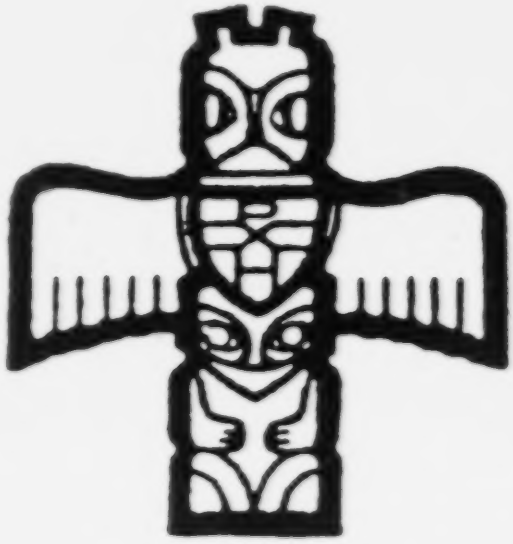
Future plans for the SEPTER project include SpecialNet training for parents and the production of a six-part videotape series on parent training to be aired on the Learn Alaska Television Network. SEPTER will also train rural native parent trainers and interpreters in rural areas of Alaska.

about PL 94-142 which said she was, by law, entitled to have a teacher. We said that if they didn't get a teacher for her we would go to court; this never had to happen. After fighting for two years we finally got a teacher. While we were fighting, though, we had no support from the community, nor from the other parents who had special children. Michelle has a teacher now, and we hope that other parents who have children with handicaps will fight for their son's or daughter's education. They should know about PL 94-142.

On February 29, Michelle went to Juneau for the Special Olympics Ski Meet. It was her first time skiing, and she came home with one gold medal and one silver medal. She is a very athletic child.

Right now, the most important thing we're trying to do is help Michelle learn how to talk more.

We're proud to have a daughter like Michelle. Even though we have hardships and hurt feelings sometimes, we love Michelle very much.



PROBLEM — SOLVING STRATEGIES

Identified by the NRP

Although the NRP (as other national projects and organizations concerned with rural education) strongly advocates individualized problem-solving, strategies NRP research identifies as potentially generic are described in this quarterly newsletter. In the left hand column are listed a number of identified needs, and in the right potential strategies which may provide solutions to meet those needs and school personnel presently using the identified strategies.

NEEDS	STRATEGIES
Parent training	
Effective family professional partnerships	
Services for rural families	
Knowledge of legal rights for parents and their children	The Rights of Parents and the Respon-
Suggested activities for parental follow-through at home	
Day care for children with disabilities	

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RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS NATIONAL PROJECT TO ASSIST PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

In September 1984, a newly-funded national project was formulated to assist both established and developing organizations of parents of handicapped children. The Technical Assistance for Parent Programs project (TAPP) will use experienced, parent-operated organizations to offer technical assistance with special education laws and procedures to parents of children with disabilities.

The TAPP project began as a result of amendments to the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act. TAPP is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Martha Zeigler, Project Director, explains the rationale for the project: "The original act had recognized an active, decision-making role for parents of handicapped students in helping to plan for and monitor their special education programs. Subsequently, the amendments (known as Public Law 98-199) provided specifically for parent training and information programs to increase the likelihood that the parents would be knowledgeable and effective partners with the staff of their youngsters' schools."

TAPP's newly-designated regional centers are Washington State PAVE in Tacoma, Washington; Pacer Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Parent Information Center in Concord, New Hampshire; and Project TASK in Orange, California.

For information about the TAPP project, its services, and the regional centers, contact Cynthia Gilles, Project Manager, TAPP Project, 312 Stuart Street, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02116, (617) 482-2915.

EQUAL PARTNERSHIP ENSURES QUALITY

The Ohio Coalition Parent/Education Team Training Project is designed to provide and maintain the partnership among school personnel and parents in need of special education services through the establishment of a statewide network. The Ohio Coalition team trainers provide workshops to train building principals, educators, and parents of handicapped children. The project has increased positive, active parental involvement in the educational process; diminished adversarial relationships; provided appropriate assistance for parents in need of services; and improved service coordination resulting in financial savings.

Additional information is available from Margaret Burley, Director, 933 High Street, Suite 200-H, Worthington, OH 43085.

EDUCATIONAL NETWORKING OF RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

To meet the need for more effective communication and interaction between parents of handicapped children and public school personnel, the Educational Network of Resources and Information for Classrooms and Homes (ENRICH) was developed. Funded by a federal grant to the Kentucky Department of Education, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Children, the Department of Education collaborates with the Parent Education and Resource Center at the University of Louisville in project implementation.

Project ENRICH's goals include development, implementation, and evaluation of a statewide training and resource system for teachers and parents of exceptional children. The focus is on training of personnel in parent education/involvement for serving exceptional children.

The field-based "Training of Trainers" model provides a system for optional utilization of state and local resources. The model facilitates training in Kentucky by reducing the need for personnel to travel long distances to receive training. Master Trainers, representing a wide range of expertise and experience, were selected from each of seventeen areas that comprise the state. The Master Trainers completed parent education/involvement training, and are in the process of replicating the training for Support Trainers from their areas. Training topics include: operating parent education/involvement programs, volunteer programs, and resource centers; conducting parent conferences; working with agencies and community groups; establishing behavior change programs in the home; understanding feelings and attitudes toward individuals who are handicapped; building skills for parent-child interaction in the home; training parents as tutors; focusing on nutritional needs and physical development of children who are handicapped.

Upon completion of ENRICH training, Support Trainers are responsible for working with personnel at the local level. Master Trainers and project staff provide Support Trainers with ongoing technical assistance and consultation. At the close of the project, an estimated 8,000+ teachers, parents, and other interested personnel will have received ENRICH training.

For more information on the project, contact the Kentucky Department of Education, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Children, Unit of Staff Development, 8th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, KY 40601, (502) 564-3790.

RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

PARENTS EDUCATING PARENTS PROJECT

Located at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, this project's three main goals are provision of service to parents of handicapped children and youth, service to the schools, and facilitation of home/school cooperation.

Services to parents of handicapped children and youth include provision of materials and information on parenting needs, information on responsibilities and rights regarding their child's education, and teaching parents to help other parents improve educational services for handicapped children.

Services to the schools include workshops and inservice training on working effectively with parents of handicapped children and youth, educating parents to assist with their child's education, and materials focusing on improving cooperation between the school and home.

Home/school cooperation services include facilitating parent and teacher communication; encouraging parent and teacher planning and implementation of individual education plans; and increasing awareness of problems, needs, and goals of educators and parents.

Additional information is available from the Parents Educating Parents Project, Department of Special Education, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPED FOR AVOIDING SEXUAL ABUSE

A variety of training methods to teach handicapped children strategies for avoiding sexual abuse have been developed by Grandview School in Kent, Washington. The curriculum, entitled **Self-Protection for the Handicapped**, includes a slide show with accompanying dialogue depicting children in situations which could involve exploitation. Through these scenarios, children learn which parts of the body are appropriate areas for adults to touch and which parts are private. Role playing of assertive responses to sexual advances is a component of the curriculum. Another unit deals with safety precautions which should be taken with people who are defined as strangers. Materials are especially adapted for mentally and physically handicapped students and include pre-tests and post-tests to monitor progress on objectives.

For more information about the curriculum, contact Molly Roeseler, 415 5th Avenue West, Kirkland, WA 98003 (206) 827-6313.

IOWA PILOT PARENTS PROJECT OFFERS SUPPORT SERVICES

When parents first discover their child is developmentally disabled, they often are plunged into feelings of guilt, despair, and self-pity. Most are unsure where to turn for emotional support and medical services.

The Iowa Pilot Parents Program is staffed by parents who already have experienced this turmoil. These volunteers offer understanding; facts about developmental disabilities and handicapping conditions; plus information about services, educational programs, and support and advocacy programs.

The Pilot Parents Program was initiated in 1971 by Fran Porter of Omaha, Nebraska. The networking was so successful that by 1977 the Omaha program received a three-year grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to provide outreach to four neighboring states. The goal was to establish ten sites in Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri. Because of the commitment and need for such support, ten sites were established in Iowa alone. When federal funding was discontinued in late 1979, a developmental disabilities grant was allocated to continue the program. Estimating that 45,000 inhabitants of Iowa are handicapped and 15 percent of newborns are developmentally disabled, funding was easily justified.

The program provides a systematic approach to helping parents immediately after they learn their child is handicapped. Receiving help during this initial period of emotional crisis assists parents in making an earlier adjustment to the fact that their child is developmentally disabled and in accepting that child as a valuable individual. New families in the Pilot Parents Program do not gain specific answers; rather, they gain more positive attitudes and expectations regarding their child, and acquire information on services available and legal rights of the handicapped.

Pilot Parents are themselves parents who have learned to accept their handicapped child. The experienced parents offer something that other support systems -- friends, doctors, clergy, family -- cannot provide: they have experienced the emotions and real problems that having a handicapped child presents. Above all, the volunteers offer empathy, and the new parents learn that they, too, can cope with their child's disability.

Other services provided by the Pilot Parents Program include a quarterly newsletter, resource packets, family camping weekends, and information about obtaining appropriate education for children with disabilities.

To learn more about the project, contact Carla Lawson, 1602 10th Avenue North, P.O. Box 1151, Fort Dodge, IA 50501, (515) 576-5870.

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RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

EARLY INTERVENTION PROVIDED BY FAMILY, INFANT AND PRESCHOOL PROJECT

Family, Infant and Preschool Project (FIPP) an outreach unit of the Western Carolina Center for the Mentally Retarded, is a community-based, early-intervention program serving parents in twenty counties.

FIPP focuses on the family's entire social system and strives to prevent institutionalization of handicapped children by providing a variety of support services. Home-based parent training is viewed as the best way to accomplish this goal.

Some of the services provided by FIPP include:

—Project HOPE, a parent-to-parent program which offers informational and emotional support and training in communication skills.

—"Let's Grow Together" workshops for siblings of children with disabilities. These workshops are designed to help children understand both handicaps and their feelings for brothers and sisters with special needs.

—The Competency-Based Training Program, a course for parents of handicapped infants and preschoolers. Child learning, management and development of self-esteem are emphasized.

—Library Resources, a service which allows parents to borrow toys, books and other materials at no charge.

Through these and other programs, a working partnership between parents and professionals has been established to provide early intervention for children with special needs. For more information about their wide variety of programs, contact Rebecca Moon, Coordinator, Community Resources Services, FIPP, Western Carolina Center, Enola Rd., Morganton, NC 28655.

NATIONAL PARENT CHAIN

The National Parent Coalition for Handicapped Americans Information Network (CHAIN) is a volunteer organization whose purpose is to establish a national information and education network for handicapped citizens and their families. The goals of CHAIN include: (1) linking existing groups for information exchange; (2) developing informational networks in states requesting assistance; (3) electronically disseminating timely information; (4) channeling communication between states and the federal government; (5) providing immediate access and input to state and national public policy regarding the handicapped; and (6) providing a united front in resolving problems of the handicapped.

For information, contact National Parent Coalition for Handicapped Americans Information Network, 515 West Gilles Lane, Peoria, IL 61614.

PARENT-TO-PARENT TRAINING PROJECT

A regional center for TAPP (Technical Assistance for Parent Programs) has been established in Tacoma, Washington. The Parent-to-Parent Training Project, PAVE, is a pilot program for students eligible for services from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. The program assists students in effecting the transition from their school system into competitive employment. On-site job training is emphasized in the program.

Each team consists of the individual student, his/her parents, pilot site coordinator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, and the special education and vocational education representatives. The team develops comprehensive vocational plans for the identified student. The process begins in grade eight, and the student's individual education program (IEP) is reviewed semi-annually to check progress and re-evaluate goals and objectives.

The parent organization provides publicity about policies, activities, and programs to encourage vocational rehabilitation. Information about legal rights and responsibilities of parents and school systems is disseminated. Parents are responsible for public relations with prospective employers and supporters of the program to encourage employment of people with disabilities.

For information about the project, contact Washington PAVE Parent-to-Parent Training Project, 1010 South I, Tacoma, WA 98405, (206) 272-7804.

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FIFTH ANNUAL NATIONAL RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Plans are underway for the Fifth Annual National Special Education Conference which will be held at ACRES' new headquarters in Bellingham, Washington, on March 19-22, 1985. The theme of the conference is "The Nuts and Bolts of Rural Special Education." Topics will include some of the following:

- Rural Special Education Teaching Strategies and Practices
- Using Advanced Technologies in Rural Areas
- Rural Special Education Research and Preservice Models and Techniques
- Development of Transition Programs and Community Partnerships
- Parent Involvement and Training Techniques
- Grantwriting Techniques and Strategies
- Rural Special Delivery Models
- Special Education Administration in Rural Areas
- Personnel Training Issues
- Working in Cross-Cultural Settings
- Rural Research and Policy Development

Post-conference tours to the San Juan Islands and Vancouver, British Columbia, will be arranged through a local agent. More information will be available on this at a later date.

Arrangements have been made with American Airlines to help conference attendees secure the **least expensive fare** to Bellingham. American is offering a **Meeting Saver Fare**, equal to their Super Saver Fare, with no minimum stay restrictions.

For more information, contact: Conference Coordinator, The American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES), Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225, (206) 676-3576.

RURAL TASK FORCES TO MEET

The National Rural Family-Professional Task Force and the National Task Force on Effective Rural Transition Programs were initiated by members of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) in March of 1984. The task forces are co-led by rural parents of children with disabilities. Each is developing resource documents and linkages between rural families who need assistance and potential resources. Each task force will host a working session of its members during the March 19-22, 1985, National Rural Special Education Conference in Bellingham, Washington. For further information concerning the conference, contact ACRES National Rural Special Education Conference, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR THE NATIONAL RURAL INDEPENDENT LIVING NETWORK (NRILN):

Sandy Watkins
National Rural Independent Living Network
218 Miller Hall
Western Washington University
Bellingham, WA 98225
(206) 676-2860

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RURAL TRANSITION STRATEGIES

Some transition programs have developed an effective strategy for convincing employers and businesses to hire people with disabilities. Effective transition programs stress the fact that when a person with a disability is hired, the business is hiring not only that individual, but also the transition program staff as a support team. The staff can act as trainers, develop task analysis training processes for job skills, conduct inservice training programs for co-workers, and act as facilitators in settling disputes. This approach has alleviated many of the worries and apprehensions of employers, and seems to provide a powerful incentive.

The American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) is currently implementing a three-year transition project. Manuals describing employer incentives will be developed, as well as an evaluative compilation of existing transition programs and strategies. Model transition programs will also be developed, field-tested, and monographs written for replication. For more information contact: Phebe Schwartz, Transition Specialist, ACRES, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225, (206) 676-3576, SpecialNet ACRES.

CROSS-CULTURAL TASK FORCE BEING ESTABLISHED

A National Rural Cross-Cultural Task Force is being established to identify strategies of working in cross-cultural settings. If you are interested in serving on this task force, contact: Task Force Coordinator, ACRES, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

The Rural Special Education Quarterly has been published since the Fall of 1979 as the National Rural Project (NRP) Newsletter. The Quarterly is now produced by the National Rural Development Institute and will continue to feature up-to-date information on issues regarding services to disabled individuals in rural America. The subscription remains $12.00 per year.

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EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT IN RURAL AREAS

by
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The past two decades have witnessed a population shift from rural to urban areas that has resulted in a reduction in the number of children being educated in rural areas. School boards and administrators have watched their tax bases erode over time, and have been unable to do anything about it. Inadequate staffing and reductions in the delivery of services are a result of these changes. Consequently, any assessment model implemented must be designed to meet the unique needs of rural school districts, especially when identifying and serving the mildly handicapped "learning problem" students. Generally, these students will remain in the regular classroom for the major portion of the day, with the regular classroom teacher providing the bulk of their education.

Traditional Assessment Models

Most rural and urban school districts utilize the traditional psychoeducational, or diagnostic-remedial assessment model in which school psychologists play the dominant role. A battery of tests is administered and educational recommendations are based directly upon psychological test results. This model was originally developed to meet three basic objectives: 1) to identify the cause of the learning problem, 2) to determine a student's learning style, and 3) to develop a plan to meet the student's special needs.

The diagnostic results are arrived at by gathering data from standardized tests, many of which may not even be educationally oriented. The results consist of norm-referenced measures in the areas of intelligence, achievement and behavior. The measures compare a student's performance to the performances of other students, which in turn determines placement and remedial procedures. Information identifying the student's developmental skills is minimal.

By the late 1970's, a number of concerns about standardized testing became evident:

1. Many culturally different and handicapped children are sorted and channeled into special classes which do not provide an appropriate education (Plata, 1977).
2. Accountability based on standardized testing is inadequate, as these tests cannot judge how well schools are doing their jobs (Herndon, 1976).
3. Norm-referenced achievement tests do not indicate what the student has learned, but only how he ranks in comparison with others (Resnick, 1977).
4. The information from standardized tests isn't useful for remediation purposes (Owens, Braggio and Ellen, 1976).
5. Standardized tests are used to label students, rank them and admit or reject them from classes, programs and/or school (Farrell, 1977).

One of the overriding issues in special education regarding the extreme reliance on standardized norm-referenced tests is that they cannot be used in developing specific instructional objectives. The passage of PL 94-142 in 1975 required that specific goals and objectives based on a team's assessment of the student's needs be developed into an Individual Education Plan (IEP). As a result of this, and other regulations mandated by PL 94-142, there has been a growing need to use other than standardized norm-referenced tests.

An Alternate Model

School psychologists in rural areas are often overworked with extremely large caseloads. Since many function on an "itinerant" basis, there may be little contact between the psychologists and the classroom teachers. Once the evaluation is completed, the placement made, and the IEP written, all contact between the teacher and the school psychologist may be severed. However, because both regular and special education teachers are not prepared to conduct educational evaluations, they must rely almost totally on the psychological evaluation, which is classification and placement oriented. As a result, the instruction which these diagnostically untrained special education teachers provide students may not be geared to their students' educational needs and, in fact, may be entirely inappropriate.

An appropriate model is one in which both special and regular education teachers are trained in the use of criterion-referenced testing (CRT), **not in lieu of, but in addition to** the standardized testing required by State and Federal regulations. Harris and Sipay (1975) stated that the CRT's indicate whether a person has mastered a certain skill rather than how well it has been mastered in relation to a norm. In 1977, the National Education Association Task Force recommended a number of alternatives to standardized norm-referenced testing. Included among these were CRT's. They provide information to teachers about each child's performance in relation to the instructional program. Instructional objectives can be established to assist the teacher in delineating goals and objectives.

Development of the Model

In 1982, the Program for Exceptional Children, located in the College of Education at the University of South Carolina, was funded through the United States Department of Education - Special Education Programs for a personnel preparation grant to develop a "Model Diagnostic Training Project." The intent of this three-year grant has been to prepare teachers from all areas of predominately rural South Carolina to conduct both educational and developmental diagnoses and develop and implement individualized education programs.

The project training is provided to both regular and special education teachers. It is possible that some educators have had some training in testing methods. However, if they are to continue to be held responsible for mild-to-moderate children — either on a full-time basis, or in a combination resource room/regular classroom placement — they need additional skills in both diagnosis and remediation that emphasize CRT and informal assessment.

Many rural school districts are very small, and there may not be a special education teacher in every school. It then becomes imperative for at least one teacher in each school to have training in educational diagnosis in order to begin to meet the educational needs of handicapped students in the regular classroom, or to refer them for further psycho-educational assessment and possibly special education placement. Regular and special education teachers need to be able to work together to exchange information and do overall planning if the mild-to-moderate handicapped students are to receive appropriate services.

An additional problem that must be faced by teachers in rural areas is the lack of financial resources to continue education beyond a minimum bachelor's degree and certification. Those who can make the weekly trips to a college campus may discover that the instruction in classes on assessment and remediation is designed to meet the needs of teachers in middle-class urban areas. In order to have meaning, this type of training must be taken to teachers in their school districts and demonstrated in their own classrooms with their own students. When teachers actually **see** "college" theories and ideas applied in the rural classroom situation, they can then attach real meaning to what is being presented to them by college and university faculty. This procedure requires major adaptations in the methods and materials used in college facilities.

The instructional approach of the project focuses on analyzing learning tasks and their subcomponents in the academic and developmental areas, rather than on categorizing a student based on test scores from a standard achievement test. Teachers must determine what is relevant to students in their particular school situation since the subcomponents of a task may be different in each school. Because the "ruralness" of rural school districts varies, what is being taught and how it is taught must be related to the situation at hand, and not to some generalized form of determining the tasks to be performed. The teachers must learn how to gather the data in their particular settings so that appropriate objectives can be designed with facilities and individual needs in mind.

Instruction based on individual needs, rather than standardized test scores, allows a student to progress at his own rate. The rural student who does not initially possess certain skills may be helped to grasp them more quickly and advance beyond the need for special education services. As the teachers develop skills which will enable effective instructional planning for their students, the rural student will be better served and may not require special education services for as long a period of time.

Training teachers to diagnose the needs of a student within the developmental areas is a very important aspect of this model. Since a student's performance on the task and its subtasks is being examined, the readiness skills for those tasks can be evaluated. For those who do not have the necessary readiness skills for a particular academic task, testing can be switched to a developmental emphasis.

Early childhood assessment is extremely important for poor minority and rural students since many of their parents do not know how to prepare them to be successful in school. Students at the preschool level can be evaluated to determine how they are functioning within the developmental areas and whether or not they are acquiring skills that will enable them to succeed in a formal academic program. If developmental weaknesses are identified prior to first grade, many academic problems can be prevented and the need for special education services reduced. Also, the tests that school psychologists administer are required for classification purposes. Most teachers do not advocate the labeling of younger students but do want to know what to do to get them ready for first grade.

Implementation of the Model

The majority of the training of teachers takes place in their schools, with only one to two days a semester required on the university campus. During the first week of the semester, teachers receive an intensive one-day training session on data gathering techniques, including observation, interviewing and testing. This provides teachers with the base knowledge for performing assessment activities.

During the following two weeks, each teacher gathers data with the assistance of a graduate assistant from the university. The teacher chooses a student who appears to be in need of additional assessment and curriculum modifications. After interviewing parents, the teacher then interviews all others in the school who know and work with the child. With the graduate assistant, the teacher then decides upon the testing instruments and methods to be used. Throughout the training, the teachers are cautioned not to contribute to the "battered child syndrome" in which all students, regardless of their problems, are given a standardized battery of tests, whether they need them or not.

The assessment is performed with the graduate assistant observing and supervising the session. As soon as these data are gathered, a university faculty member meets with the teacher and the graduate assistant in a day-long session. The group discusses perceptions of the procedures implemented thus far in order to determine changes.

The majority of the day, however, is spent in training to interpret the assessment data for educational programming. Participants are taught to construct profiles which record the skills that have been mastered and those that are to be mastered in a prescribed manner. After the student responses are recorded, teachers are then shown how to integrate the initial information obtained with these data. Interpretation of this information will ultimately be placed in a written educational, or developmental, report. The format for such reports is presented to the teachers. Finally, the group begins to select appropriate goals, strategies and materials for the student's individualized educational/developmental program.

Following this session, graduate assistants again work with the teachers on developing and writing their reports. Teachers learn how to integrate all gathered information and organize it for task interpretation. After interpretation is completed, information is then organized into an outline so that report writing can be accomplished. An approach toward instruction is decided, goals are established, and strategies are specified for achieving goals for the IEP. These procedures equip the teacher with the needed skills for each step involved in the CRT assessment process.

The teacher again meets with the university faculty member to discuss any problems encountered thus far in the assessment process. A major focus is training in the area of communication. Experiences are provided so the teacher feels comfortable communicating the implications of assessment information. As an example, teachers role play providing results of the diagnosis to parents and other teachers. They plan the best way to put the data into written form so that others can interpret it. The use of video tapes helps teachers visualize themselves in the training situation so they can become better communicators to parents and educators.

After this, teachers contact the parents and proceed with the formal conference. When the conference is completed, the teacher meets with all other teachers of the student to present assessment findings.

The IEP is then developed and presented to the graduate assistant for editing. The corrected report is typed and copies mailed to the child's parents and an appropriate number of copies kept in the school. This procedure enables the teacher to develop skills in communicating the entire assessment process in written form. Throughout all of the training, teachers are well aware of, and are versed in, the due process procedures. This way there will be no legal problems associated with the teacher's work. By doing the testing, making the interpretations and meeting with parents, they not only understand due process but are actually engaged in it on an ongoing basis.

Under the supervision of the graduate assistants and university personnel, the teacher then proceeds through an additional three cases. The final assignment is to meet as a group. All teachers present the findings of their respective cases and the group makes recommendations for alternative ways of handling each case. This process enables the teachers to gain skills in presenting findings of educational/developmental assessment findings before a group of professionals.

Personnel trained in utilizing this model learn to function more effectively as teachers in rural school settings. The teachers are not only able to develop educational programs tailored to the unique developmental needs of special students, but also gain knowledge and experience in observation and communication skills.

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RESPONSES TO "EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT IN RURAL AREAS"

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Finally, we are standing up to the challenge of answering the teacher's real question: "What should I be doing in class with Johnny?" The model described in the article "Educational Assessment in Rural Areas" has addressed the primary need of rural teachers of the handicapped: the need for hands-on assistance in the development of specific instructional objectives. This can only be done through the utilization of criterion-referenced testing (CRT).

In Canada we have long relied on the advantages of CRT. This is partially due to the fact that we have not been heavily bound by requirements for labeling children in order to access appropriate educational services. The prominence of CRT is also due to the lack of relevancy many test norms have to rural or Canadian populations. In fact, standardized test information may not even be necessary if there are no placement options. In rural areas, special needs children may often have no choice but to remain in the regular classroom. As a result, regular and resource room teachers must carry the load in educating these children. Particularly in such situations, CRT holds additional value. It can lighten the load of daily programming by providing the necessary information for the development of specific instructional objectives and the relevant criteria for the development of individualized grading systems. This practical information is needed to satisfactorily answer the programming questions of rural teachers of the handicapped.

To further improve the rural assessment model described, I would like to suggest consideration of the following: 1) Extension of teacher training to include programming for exceptional children beyond that of the mild to moderately handicapped. Many sensory-impaired and multiply-handicapped children are also in need of improved services in the rural areas. Why solve only a portion of the problem? 2) Emphasis on the importance of community input in the development of individual program plans. Particularly in rural areas, support services must strive to work cooperatively (not autonomously) in order to meet the needs of handicapped children. We all must help to bridge the gap between education, medicine, social services and other support personnel.

It is our responsibility to face the challenges of rural handicapped education head on. Any model which can more effectively meet the needs of the individual child within the constraints of a rural system must be seriously considered.

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My response to this article should not be considered an attack on criterion-referenced testing (CRT); however, several issues are problematic. These are the methods used to move rural educators from reliance on norm-referenced testing (NRT) to CRT, the preparation of educators to use CRT, and the minor issue of confusing standardized tests with norm-referenced tests.

The authors are attempting to bring about an innovation in rural schools and are relying on rational-empirical methods to do so (Chin & Benne, 1976). Yet people and the organizations in which they function adopt innovations for non-rational reasons. People and organizations accept such innovations if they perceive that the innovation can fill a need, and if the nature of the organization supports the change (Chin & Benne, 1976; Sarason, 1971; Schein, 1969). However, this is frequently not the case; for example, Sarason describes the failure of the "new math" to be accepted by instructors because innovators did not take into account the nature of classrooms in which the innovation would be implemented. To their credit, the authors have gone much further than other innovators in demonstrating to teachers how CRT can be implemented in their own classrooms. Closer to the CRT "issue," a bill was passed last spring in Kentucky which will allow the state to take over districts found to be in "academic receivership," currently the Kentucky Department of Education is attempting to develop the criteria on which school districts will be evaluated, and it is possible that California Test of Basic Skills scores will be used in identifying low-performing districts. If this takes place, there will be pressure on teachers to focus attention away from CRT methods to methods for raising CTBS scores.

More than half of all school psychologists have been trained since Ronald Carver's article on "edumetric" assessment appeared in the **American Psychologist** (Carver, 1974), and most have learned how to use CRT in their training programs, yet most utilize only NRT assessment devices: many believe (usually erroneously) that the state or district requires them to utilize a specific NRT battery for each child referred for placement. Many school psychologists have failed to use CRT devices because of organizational failures to adopt CRT. I hope, therefore, that the author's training program includes generous doses of organizational dynamics and assertiveness training. The authors' innovation reminds me of what Paul Watzlawick called first-order change, when second-order change (e.g., changing the school's conception of what assessment information is useful rather than substituting one type of assessment for another) is required (Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch, 1974).

Another organizational issue is that often the practitioners of an innovation within an organization become overwhelmed with referrals for their services, particularly if a school is understaffed with professionals, as rural schools often are. Although the authors were not specific about the numbers of teachers trained from each school, a way to prevent these teachers from burning out is to ensure that more than one teacher in each school goes through the training.

Finally, there is a confusion between the terms "standardized" and "norm-referenced" tests, which mean different things, but which the authors use interchangeably. Standardization implies that each student receives the same test, whereas norm-referenced means that a student is compared to the mean performance of comparable students. I do not believe the authors wish to argue for either criterion-referenced or norm-referenced tests not to be standardized. Tests which are not standardized are more open to the caprice of the tester; on the other hand, norm-referenced tests, as the authors state, do not provide instructionally useful information. However, it is possible to have standardized CRTs.

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RESPONSES TO "EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT IN RURAL AREAS" (Continued)

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In pressing for the increased use of criterion-referenced testing (CRT) in rural special education settings, McIntosh and Raymond follow an emphasis reintroduced in recent years by McClelland (1973) in the oft-cited article, "Testing for Competence Rather Than for 'Intelligence.'" As a rural school psychologist of six years who has this year relocated to another rural system in order to teach basic vocational skills to remedial high school students, the present writer has a general agreement with the likely efficacy of the proposed model. My reservations are largely with regard to cost and availability of time during the working day of most rural special education teachers to conduct CRT, which, classically, is more time-demanding when done well. In the latter regard as noted by the authors, however, teachers of special students at times encounter a void in many psychological reports concerning findings which might be directly transferred into instructional objectives. As reported by Fagan (1981), the situation exists particularly in rural southern systems where evaluations are often performed on a contractual basis by examiners with little expertise in school psychology. Even when evaluations are conducted by qualified assessment specialists, most rural systems tend to be strapped with excessive backlogs which mandate a vicious testing/report-writing cycle. The same "disincentives" enumerated by Helge (1983) as affecting the recruitment and retention of special education teachers for rural settings also serve to foster comprehensive assessment and subsequent teacher-examiner collaboration.

The present writer appreciates McIntosh and Raymond's point that the proposed model of CRT implementation would be an addition to, not a substitute for, standardized testing (ST). The listed concern that ST "may not be useful for remediation purposes" would seem to depend upon the assessment conclusions. In a workshop featuring Lawrence Hartlage, for example, the psychoneurologist described a study in which first graders who had been identified as either left or right-hemispheric dominant through ST and matched with instructional approaches consistent with the dominant hemisphere's preferred mode of processing excelled in reading mastery over students in control groups. Currently, ST shows promise of more instructionally relevant information than in prior years. In truth, a testing program never fully abandons a norm-referenced view.

While psychologists are viewed by many educators as the prime movers in current red tape requiring the classification of students prior to provision of services, the practice is largely the outgrowth of lobbying by advocates for children diagnosed as handicapped under the various categories generally recognized in legislation. The late psychologist Nicholas Hobbs, for example, chaired the national commission which registered its concern over the necessity of labeling handicapped students. During the writer's early training, special education was defined as modified instructional programming offered to students whose educational needs could not adequately be met within the regular classroom. Since that time, there has been a wide divergence from this guideline. For example, under Tennessee's current criteria for classification of students having specific learning disabilities, a fifth grader with an IQ of 105 who is working a year below grade level may be certified as handicapped, whereas a classmate with an IQ of 75 who is working over two years below grade level is not eligible for special educational services since, as one state official expressed it, "that is where the student is supposed to be working." The present writer would favor an exhaustive CRT instructional needs evaluation component in the selection, placement, and program follow-up of moderately handicapped students. With sufficient funding for training, Mackintosh and Raymond's model would appear quite appropriate for rural settings.

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As a person providing services to disabled students in a rural postsecondary setting, I reviewed this paper with a great deal of anticipation. The problem of finding and utilizing appropriate assessment instruments for the "learning problem" student who is entering the postsecondary setting has been steadily increasing over the past several years. Institutional awareness of the "94-142 college-bound student population" (and concurrent realization that assessment materials are lacking) has occurred only after the arrival of the student at the postsecondary level.

The authors note that shrinking resources, coupled with rural isolation, can cause student assessment information from the traditional medical/psychological model to become all but useless in designing classroom remediation and coping strategies. This statement holds true for the rural college as well; even if assessment resources are available on campus, accessing them can prove difficult.

The authors' solution introduces criterion-referenced testing (CRT) as an additional, classroom-based supplement to traditional medical/psychological testing which often is the only diagnostic material available. CRT can quickly provide the classroom teacher with meaningful examples of the student's competencies. Rapid access to "local" information on the student's skills and abilities can aid in designing the IEP and will help to make remediation possible within the limited resources of the rural school district. I agree with the authors that the introduction of CRT into school districts could prove useful to instructors. I feel that college service providers would benefit from information about the entering student's competencies, information that could assist in counseling the student for success rather than toward failure.

I have some concerns about the cost-effectiveness and user convenience of the "Model Diagnostic Training Project" as it is described by the authors. The project combines occasional training on the university campus with supervised activities in the home classroom. The logistics of the program lead me to wonder if the model was designed to meet the needs of the rural classroom teacher or for faculty and departmental convenience. The program seems to fit within the semester system, a timetable which often conflicts with the public school schedule. The program relies heavily on the use of graduate students in field situations, supervising and monitoring the teachers served. The rationale for this training model is the author's assumption that "...teachers in rural areas...do not have the financial resources...to continue their education beyond a minimum...". I take issue with this assumption, as most teachers are required to obtain continuing education or "inservice" training hours in order to retain certification. Colleges of Education, therefore, provide extensive inservice short courses and summer intensive programs to meet the needs of a captive population of teachers needing recertification hours. Logistical analysis of the training program's structure, and the recertification requirements for the state may prove that this model, although producing valid results (and funding several graduate assistantships), may be less effective than other methods of training. Is the author's use of graduate students as teacher supervisors valid? Will an "on-campus/off-campus" remote learning experience work? The use of CRT in the rural classroom can be very helpful to the instructor, but is the dissemination methodology right?

The authors have raised important points regarding student assessment in rural areas and suggested a method of improving assessment in the classroom. However, the training model chosen may not be as effective as other models and potential users should evaluate alternate training methods.

THE RIGHT TO SAY NO: AN EDUCATIONAL CONCERN FOR STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS

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The magnitude of the problem of missing and exploited children has created a national nightmare. Annually, 1,500,000 children are listed as voluntarily or forcefully missing from home. Of children criminally or sexually exploited, 85% were missing from home at the time the act occurred. Further, it is estimated that one in ten male children and one in four female children will be raped or molested prior to reaching adulthood. While precise statistics are unknown, sexual and criminal exploitation of our nation's children is a reality (The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 1984).

Sexual exploitation of adults, adolescents, and children with physical and/or mental handicaps is creating increased public concern. An increasing number of sexual abuse clients with mental and/or physical disabilities are being served by sexual abuse treatment centers. During a two-year period, 300 reports of sexual exploitation of individuals with handicaps were documented by the Seattle Rape Relief Developmental Disabilities Project. It must be assumed that the number of sexual exploitations was actually much higher as Seattle Rape Relief estimates that only 20% of the handicapped victims reported the occurrence (Seattle Rape Relief Developmental Disabilities Project, 1984).

Reporting of sexual exploitation is complicated by the fact that the offender is generally known by the victim. During the two-year period studied, 99% of handicapped victims who reported the incident to Seattle Rape Relief were exploited by relatives, friends, caretakers, and acquaintances. Unfortunately, the handicapped victim may not report the sexual exploitation because of threats by the offender, pacts of secrecy, fear of family disruption, or instruction that the sexual activity is normal (Seattle Rape Relief Developmental Disabilities Project, 1984).

Individuals with mental and/or physical handicaps are also vulnerable to other forms of exploitation. Through advocacy of normalization and mainstreaming, integration of individuals with handicaps with non-handicapped persons has been advanced. Without appropriate assertiveness skills and self-protection techniques, the person with a handicap may be the victim of criminal exploitation as he/she increasingly participates in the mainstream of society.

Individuals with mental and/or physical handicaps have both a right and a need to know techniques of self-protection to prevent sexual and/or criminal exploitation. The Developmental Disabilities Project of Seattle Rape Relief has developed a Sexual Abuse and Self-Protection Curriculum to address this need. The curriculum is a comprehensive approach to education regarding sexual exploitation. Curricular goals include awareness of sexual exploitation, how and where to report sexual exploitation, and avoiding/preventing sexual exploitation. The curriculum has been organized for two student levels: developmental ages 6-11 and developmental ages 12-19 including mentally retarded adults. The materials have been designed for students who are borderline to moderately mentally retarded with special instructions included for use with physically, sensory, or language handicapped students. The curriculum kits are available for purchase with teacher training recommended and available through the Developmental Disabilities Project of Seattle Rape Relief.

To meet the needs of students functioning at lower ability levels and address other forms of exploitation, the Sexual Abuse and Self-Protection Curriculum has been modified and adapted for students with moderate to severe handicapping conditions. The modified self-protection curriculum addresses exploitation in general. Vocabulary levels have been controlled and curricular units progress from identifying relationships to protecting information and reporting exploitation (Behrns and Fisher, 1984).

Advocacy for the rights of individuals with handicaps is a continuous process. If individuals with handicapping conditions are to exercise the right to say "no" to sexual and other forms of exploitation, they must be provided with an adequate knowledge base upon which to make their decision.

References and Resources

Seattle Rape Relief - Developmental Disabilities Project
c/o Yvette Parr
1825 South Jackson, Suite 102
Seattle, WA 98144

Self Protection for the Handicapped
Charlene Behrns and Gary L. Fisher
Kent Public Schools
12033 S.E. 256th
Kent, WA 98031

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
1835 K Street N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20006

PROTECT YOUR CHILD: INFORMATION FROM THE CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, has produced a brochure which provides general information on child safety as well as particular information for parents of disabled children. In addition, the Child Safety Program is encouraging communities to organize Child Safety Days to help get parents and children to talk about the problem. Brochures on child safety and a Child Safety Program Handbook with more details on organizing a Child Safety Day are available. For more information, contact: ACTION, Child Safety Program, Washington, D.C. 20525, (800) 424-8867.

PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGIES

Although we strongly advocate individualized problem-solving, strategies our research identifies as potentially generic are described in this quarterly newsletter. Listed in the left hand column are a number of identified needs. In the right hand column, you will find potential strategies which may provide solutions to meet those needs and school personnel presently using the identified strategies.

NEEDS	STRATEGIES
Early intervention in mainstream settings	
Methods of mainstreaming rural special needs students	
Training ideas to highlight rural needs	
Effective rural screening	
Computer data base to serve the needs of rural disabled people	

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COST EFFECTIVENESS CONSIDERATIONS IN THE DELIVERY OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

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As a school psychology trainer I am provided with ample opportunities to interact with teachers, administrators and school psychologists about the delivery of psychological services. These discussions often focus upon two closely related matters: the role and function of the psychologist in the school system, and the apparent high cost of these services. The special or regular class teacher might say, "I have no idea what it costs the district but all I get are test scores and recommendations of questionable utility." The building administrator, superintendent or special education director might say, "I'm paying almost $200 per day for a psychologist in order to meet the state regulations but my net gain seems to be greater enrollments in special education, waiting lists, and increasing costs." This psychologist might say, "All these people want from me is to test children all day, every week and provide scores with limited recommendations. It looks like a systemic problem and even a waste of their money in some cases." If you look deep into the eyes of these people, you will often see redness and dollar signs from frustration.

The general problems of role and function and the foundation for the frustrations therein were discussed in a previous NRP article (Fagan, 1981). The present article will focus on the cost effectiveness problems in obtaining psychological services, especially in rural and remote areas. Two assumptions, however, must be presented in relation to cost: 1) it is assumed that school instructional and administrative personnel are sufficiently frustrated by the Refer-Test-Report (RTR) model of services that they are prepared to make attempts to adopt other approaches for the provision of psychological services. Other approaches such as consultation with school personnel and parents; preventive programs for children, parents and teachers; and direct intervention are clearly within the repertoire of the training and skills of school psychologists. 2) The persons involved in this dilemma (teachers, administrators and school psychologists) have the same goal of attempting to improve the educational well being of all school children. That the psychological characteristics of the child and the school environment are involved in this goal should be well accepted. But, it is still an unfortunate fact that some school personnel maintain that children in need of psychological help (e.g. therapy for problems stemming from home or peer relations) are not the "business" of the school; that while we purport to be educating the "whole child," we fail to consider these components as important or to recognize that personal and social improvement (even via therapy) are learning experiences. This often forces the family to seek non-district resources for their problems and too often, especially in rural areas, such resources are either not available or not prevailed upon by the family due to travel costs, community embarrassment, etc. The long-term result may be a child whose educational performance continues to deteriorate until such time that placement in a special educational environment is required. That this often costs the school district far more than the cost of earlier intervention should be obvious. The cost of school psychological services, therefore, is closely related to what district personnel expect or demand the school psychologist to do — that is the role and function.

Restricted Roles May Increase Costs

For as long as psychologists have provided services to the schools there has been an ample pile of referrals to keep each one busy, perhaps twice over. This can occur because the presence of school psychologists often sensitizes school personnel to problems, encouraging them to make more referrals that frequently result in special class placement. The cycle is sufficiently established that in too many districts almost no time is left in the psychologist's work for non-testing functions. The systemic relationship of categorical definitions, eligibility requirements for testing, restricted psychologist's functions, team decisions based on limited information and eventual placement has been recognized in the research of Ysseldyke and his associates at the University of Minnesota (Ysseldyke, 1983). The cycle seems so strong that Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1983) concluded, "the most important decision that gets made in the entire assessment process is the decision by a regular classroom teacher to refer a student for assessment. A nationwide survey of Directors of Special Education revealed that 3 to 5% of the school population is referred; 92% of the referred students are evaluated, and 73% are placed in special education classes" (p. 30).

How does this translate into increased district expenditures for psychological services? Table 1 provides a hypothetical example of how RTR models may increase district costs even though the district believes it is attempting to cope with referrals as efficiently as possible. The example suggests that this model will triple the need for psychological services largely as a function of the reevaluations created by the system's manner of providing services. The figures given may be conservative since 1) $15,000 is probably the minimum a district would pay for a beginning full-time school psychologist, 2) the caseloads in many districts are in excess of 100 per year, 3) the costs reflect only salaries and not employee benefits which may add about 25% to the district costs, and 4) the salaries are held constant over the twelve-year period. One could argue that the figures may be misleading, since other factors could mitigate the numbers presented. For example, the district may be declassifying or graduating as many per year as it is identifying. However, if this were a rural system just initiating special educational/psychological testing services, the example is probably conservative, not to mention the cost of special education. We might conclude that the RTR model of providing school psychological services is both expensive and inefficient from a long-term perspective. From a short-term perspective, however, it may not look that way: The teacher is right in saying, "I've got problems right here and now, and the district policy is to refer." The administrator is right in saying, "These kids can't cope in this class. The teacher is frustrated. I'm frustrated. The policy is to refer." And the psychologist is right in saying, "There are so many children with so many needs, and so many referrals that there's no time to do anything but keep up with the policy." No one group of individuals is at fault. An additional short-range consideration is the fact that most school psychological services are provided through the use of special education funds, which implies that psychological services are provided only at that point when referral and probable placement are implicated. The short-range perspective is also reinforced by the apparent perception of psychological services as synonymous with testing services regardless of the source of funding for these services (Eberst, 1984). The Eberst data even indicate that in some states school psychologists' services to non-special education students are specifically disallowed in state regulations. In those districts where special education services, including school psychological services, are funded entirely by

47

Table 1
Increasing District Costs Related to the Refer-Test-Report (RTR) Model of Psychological Services

Basic Considerations

1. Psychologist is hired into full-time position for $15,000 per school year.
2. Psychologist's caseload is approximately 100 (the annual reported caseloads in the **NASP Membership Directory** (1981) specifies that 72% of the 2808 respondents did between 50 and 125 child studies in 1981).
3. That approximately 70% of referred cases will be placed in special educational programs.
4. That federal and state regulations require some form of psychological re-evaluation every three years.

Increased Caseloads	School Year	Psychologist's Caseload New	Reevaluations	Total
	1981	100	0	100
	1982	100	0	100
	1983	100	0	100
	1984	100	70	170
	1985	100	70	170
	1986	100	70	170
	1987	100	140	240
	1988	100	140	240
	1989	100	140	240
	1990	100	210	310
	1991	100	210	310
	1992	100	210	310

Increased Costs

1981-1983 — 1 psychologist — $15,000
1984-1986 — 2 psychologists — $30,000
1987-1989 — 2 psychologists — $30,000
1990-1992 — 3 psychologists — $45,000

state and federal special education monies. The use of the RTR is monetarily reinforced since more referrals lead to more eligible placements which lead to more external monies. In such instances, school psychologists (and other assessment personnel) are inappropriately perceived as gatekeepers for children and brokers for funds. That a broader role and function is not often observed in those settings should come as no surprise. The problem is systemic and requires a system-wide response to managing referrals more efficiently and providing earlier preventive and interventive activities. Some examples of these appear in Grimes (1982), Reynolds and Gutkin (1982) and Curtis & Zins (1981). It is important that other strategies be sought since rural schools typically have fewer pupil services personnel (Fagan & Devore, 1979) and school psychologists are more likely to function as generalists on case studies. Some guidelines indicate that no more than three or four cases **per week** should be expected if the psychologist is functioning primarily in a case study capacity and less if the district desires preventive and consultation services that should reduce the long-term need for referrals to special education. Even under the best of circumstances, the district will continue to have cases requiring psychological testing and the intent of my comments is not to suggest the elimination of this role, but rather more appropriate use of the assessment role in combination with other psychologist functions. This can be accomplished even in those systems where the school psychologist is a primary broker for external funds to special education. In Sequatchie County, Tennessee, for example, the school psychologist provides preventive, interventive and assessment services in spite of the fact that she is a primary source (through evaluations and subsequent placements) of state and federal funds. The distinction between her conditions of employment and those of many other school psychologists in rural areas is due largely to an interaction of personal variables (e.g. training and competencies) and the healthy perspective on school psychological services held by her district administrators, especially the Special Education Director. This perspective is observed in their hiring of a full-time school psychologist to handle case studies and other functions which facilitate eligible children's education and mental health and prevent otherwise ineligible and non-referred students from becoming eligible in the future.

The first, and perhaps most important, point in cost considerations is that cost-effectiveness is not synonymous with cost reductions or the "low bid" attitude toward procuring services. When one considers the psychological functions in terms of eligibility assessment and related services there are cost, professional, and legal considerations (see National Association of State Boards of Education, 1983a, 1983b). What a district gains from psychological services for its expenses is more important than the absolute dollar amount expended. Nevertheless, districts are under pressure to maintain services within specific budgetary ranges and have opted for procuring school psychological services in a variety of ways. These will be discussed in light of cost-effectiveness and some suggestions made for obtaining quality services at reasonable cost.

Contractual Services Are Not Necessarily Cost-Effective

Many districts in rural areas may choose or be forced to enter into short-term, contractual agreements with non-district psychologists for the provision of testing services. The most commonly cited limitations of such arrangements include the questionable nature of some provider's credentials; the unfamiliarity of the provider with the district's goals, student population, staff, and curriculum; the unfamiliarity of the provider with State Department of Education regulations; and the proximity and availability of the provider to the district for crises conferences or team meetings (Meyer, 1983-4). But even in instances where these concerns are not present (there are several examples of "good" contractual arrangements that could be provided), the role and function issue remains central. The example given in Table 1 applies just as well to contractual agreements and in some instances may even cost the district more money, particularly on a per case or per diem contract. For example, a district might find providers that would agree to do cases at less than $150 each (salary caseload, from Table 1); the case probably would not be as intensive, involving parent and teacher conferences, team meetings, consultation, etc. But the district would be hard put to find a contract for approximately $84/day across the entire school year ($15,000/180 days). Even figuring in benefits, the availability of a district's own full-time school psychologist is a reasonable bargain compared to the costs of some contractors and part-time providers based on an entire school year (Meyer, 1983-84). I was recently contacted by a rural Special Education Director seeking a full-time school psychologist. She had been contracting with a local agency provider at a per child evaluation cost of $40. The provider typically came to the district one day at a time, when four cases on that day could be tested. She had first approached that provider about the cost of full-time services and was presented a figure of more than $30,000 per year (viz. $160/day x 180-200 days). A salary of that magnitude is probably obtained by less than 15% of practicing school psychologists in the United States, and those persons would have been "in service" for many years. Moreover, the testing of four cases per day is contrary to acceptable professional practices and should raise serious questions about the appropriateness of the evaluations and the utility of that data to any school district. In the example above, the provider most probably saw four cases on one day in order to reduce his/her own costs of travel, etc. and simply extended what he/she considered an adequate per diem fee to a full school year position. Recognizing the inadequacy of these practices, the district was seeking a more broadly defined role for a school psychologist in a full-time position. Contracting for services which include thorough diagnostic work and a breadth of functions compatible with the needs of children, the goals of districts and which do not

perpetuate the RTR Model of increasing costs and placements, is acceptable when available at a reasonable cost. Some districts choose to contract only for re-evaluations while freeing up the district's school psychologist to provide other functions. To the extent that the other functions are compatible with the above and the re-evaluation conducted in an appropriate manner, this too can be an appropriate arrangement.

"But I don't need full-time services."

The ratio of school psychologists to school-age children recommended by National and State groups is approximately 1:20,000. It is well known that many school districts are much smaller than this and that part-time service arrangements are necessary. What cost-efficient measure can then be taken?

Full-time, appropriately credentialed school psychologists report a median salary of approximately $20,000 (NASP, 1982). A **beginning** school psychologist will commonly command a salary in the range of $15,000-$20,000. One might think that part-time costs could be predicated on the full-time salary data. The fact is, that almost nothing **normative** is known about the salaries of part-time providers of school psychological services, especially those who are non-district employees. My experience leads me to believe that part-time (per diem) services are usually more expensive than a simple division of the common full-time salary would suggest. For example, many rural systems pay between $150 - $200 per day in order to obtain psychological services. Such contracts with private individuals/agencies are typically for one or more days per week, across the entire school year, i.e., $5,400 per year based on 36 weeks at $150 per week (see Table 2). This is considerably more than one-fifth the typical full-time school psychologist's salary! At a cost of $200 per day, the expense soars to $7,200 per year, not too distant from half the salary of a beginning full-time school psychologist. These dollar differences are apart from other differences encountered in case management, professional credentials, records, etc. It is very easy to understand the concern of school administrators, especially directors of special education in light of these cost figures. I have had several directors and superintendents tell me they felt they were at the mercy of available psychological services providers; that they were trapped between service mandates and limited, noncompetitive service providers.

Some state education agencies appropriately perceive school psychological services as an integral part of the state's education plan, and have sought solutions to the cost problems by creating networks of shared services. The names of the public school agencies created in these agreements vary, but they have the common purpose of providing services at reasonable quality and cost levels, while sharing services and providers across traditional district and political boundaries. New York has Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), Illinois has Special Education Cooperatives, Iowa has Area Education Agencies (AEA) and Pennsylvania has Intermediate Units. Many other states have similar joint agreements. For an example of the administrative management of such plans the reader is referred to Shulman & Doughty (1983). Such "super-districts" employ various professionals to provide psychological and other services under a variety of agreements for sharing costs, time, administration, etc. Personnel matters are typically managed by the administrator of the joint agreement district as are policies for handling cases, records, team meetings, consultation, and intervention. Distributed over an entire state, such agreements provide models for the provision of special education and related services. By having full-time school psychologists employed at market-level salaries and distributed equitably across the needs of several small districts, the rural school administrator is able to obtain quality services at a more affordable cost. Under these arrangements, even the most remote district may be able to acquire services that are otherwise unavailable or unaffordable (Bischoff & Schakel, 1981). As the needs of the district change, the type and quantity of service can be altered. For example, in one joint agreement in Northern Illinois, the participating school districts could request services by the day or half-day and by type (e.g., diagnostic assessment, teacher-parent consultation, or direct intervention). Even when not ideal, these joint agreements provide the basis for a reasonable provision of services to rural and remote areas. In Ohio, legislation allows for the use of public funds for selected types of services, including those of school psychologists, to parochial and independent schools. In December, 1983, I reviewed a private corporation's services to several of these settings and found it to be both similar to public school joint agreements and providing a quality service (Fagan, 1984).

Table 2

Hypothetical Cost Examples for the Provision of School Psychological Services to Rural and Remote School Districts Through External and Internal Means

Example A: District employs own full-time school psychologist for five days services in hiring district.

Breakdown

Cost	Item
$15,000	School Psychologist's Salary
4,000	Employee Benefits, Retirement, etc.
2,000	Psychologist's travel, professional development, equipment, administrative costs.
$21,000	Total Annual Outlay (36-week school year)

Example B: District contracts with external provider at per diem cost of $150 or $200.

Cost 1 day week	2 days week	3 days week	Item
$5,400	$10,800	$16,200	Salary
--	--	--	Employee Benefits, etc.
--	--	--	Travel, etc.
$150/day $5,400	$10,800	$16,200	Total Outlay (36-week
$200/day $7,200	$14,400	$21,600	school year)

Example C: Two school districts share a full-time school psychologist (in each district for services 2 days/week with fifth day for reports, meetings consultation, administration).
Cost per District: $10,500 (Example A - 2)

Example D: Three districts share a full-time school psychologist (in each district one day per week with two additional days for "as needed" services, reports, meetings, consultation, administration).
Cost per district: $7,000 (Example A - 3)

Example E: Four districts share a full-time school psychologist (in each district one day per week with additional day for reports, meetings, consultation, administration).
Cost per district: $5,250 (Example A - 4)

Example F: School district employs school psychologist full-time (as in Example A) but "sells" per diem services to neighboring districts at more competitive price of $120, three days per week.
Cost to district:
$21,000 (Example A)
-12,960 ($4320 x 3 districts)
$ 8,040 Actual cost to district for own services, two days/week for 36-week school year.

In some states, such joint agreements are practically nonexistent. It is common to find rural administrators contracting out for services, usually just for special education testing. It can be observed in Table 2 that several variations are possible for the provision of part-time services with substantial differences in cost and distribution. The examples provided are hypothetical and probably represent only a small number of the possibilities available for negotiation. They serve to reinforce the importance of professional contracts that engage the school psychologist in full-time employment even though services may be spread over several school districts. The examples are dif-

ferent from employment through a joint agreement district (e.g. AEA or BOCES) because the agreements here are strictly between two or more districts for psychological services only. They may, however, suggest the types of cost benefits that joint agreements also provide. The benefits to the employer and the employee are mutually advantageous. The employing district has services via a district employee, at reasonable cost, while the school psychologist has full-time employment and its attendant benefits. These advantages, often lacking in rural areas, have been cited as significant among those variables related to the problems of attracting and maintaining school psychologists (Fagan, 1981; Fagan & DeVore, 1983; Trenary, 1981).

The advantages from a cost viewpoint improve in the examples given (Table 2; C, D, E) as additional systems or days of employment are considered. Thus, when even two districts share a school psychologist, each district would be saving at least $300 in comparison to externally contracting (see Example B) and each is obtaining an additional half-day of service. The four-district example (E) is relevant to some rural areas of which I am aware where an external psychologist has provided services one day each week to each of four districts (usually geographically contiguous). From Example B it may be estimated that each of the districts pays at least $5,400 for that service. Example E suggests that these same districts could save at least $150 per year and be getting part of an additional day of service from the full-time provider. While the savings may seem small, they are enough to purchase psychological and instructional materials that might otherwise be unavailable.

Example F is provided simply to demonstrate how one district, acting on its own, might strive to lower its costs by becoming both a consumer and agency-provider of services. In the example given, the district meets its own needs (2 days/week) at a reduction of almost $2,800 (Example B) while dispensing services to neighboring districts at more competitive prices than private individuals/clinics may offer. The example, while perhaps impractical in many places, warrants consideration because it is often the lack of collegial district cooperation that encourages higher costs. Here no inter-district shared agreement is necessary. The three consuming districts continue to get services as usual but via a different contractor—a neighboring school system. This may be particularly useful in areas where more formal agreements across state boundaries would be very difficult to negotiate.

There are school settings where the above shared arrangements are simply impossible, where going it alone is necessary and where acquiring more than one or two days' services is impossible. Even in these settings, cost effectiveness can be achieved, though it is clear that these services almost never come cheap. At the very least, the consumer district must ensure that these services are of a quality level consistent with the needs of the children served by the district. Several considerations are important: 1) **Shop around.** Compare service descriptions and costs among private individual providers, community mental health centers, and professional groups before making a choice. State Psychology Licensing Boards, State Department of Education Consultants on School Psychological Services, State Mental Health Agencies can often provide assistance in finding professionals and agencies in your region. As a general rule such part-time services must be contracted on a per-case or per-diem basis. Each district will have to decide which basis best meets its needs. 2) **Scrutinize the credentials** of the potential providers to ensure that the person hired has appropriate training and/or experience with school-age children in school settings. A State Department of Education certificate as a school psychologist (most states issue such a credential) is the best general assurance of this. If the person is not so certificated, seek to ensure that their license as a psychological examiner or psychologist includes a designation in school psychology. In states where license designations are not given, scrutinize the credentials to ensure that the person's training is appropriate to your psychological service needs. In some instances, the related services needs may be separate from the usual duties of a school psychologist and licensed persons in clinical or other areas of psychology may be preferred. 3) **Make reasonable expectations** for such services. Three or four case studies per day is not reasonable. A well conducted study can involve at least ten hours of assessment personnel time. In instances where several assessment personnel are available, two cases per day might be expected but other types of psychological services could not be provided. 4) **Diversify services.** Avoid using psychologists' time just for evaluations for special education placement. Try to build in time for teacher consultation with special class teachers experiencing problems with eligible children and with regular class teachers seeking to reduce the need for special education referrals. Consider using the psychologist to provide services you might otherwise have to forego or hire additional persons to conduct, such as inservice education of staff and program evaluation. 5) **Time management is important.** Too often the psychologist's time is wasted traveling to distant schools only to learn that the child is sick and absent or otherwise unavailable for service. In some districts such inefficiency may consume one-third or more of the staff time. Schedule cases and other services carefully. Share your needs and expectations with the psychologist and set timeline goals together. While each of the above suggestions can apply to shared and full-time service arrangements, they are especially important to part-time contractual services to rural settings.

Intern Services

Another mode of expanding or initiating quality services is via the training/internship process of school psychologists. Many university programs annually seek internship sites for graduates and students in training. While supervision is expected to be provided locally, there are acceptable arrangements whereby neighboring district psychologists or university staff may provide the supervision. Because of the training and service nature of the internship, it is typically less costly to the district than employing additional school psychologists. In states with well-developed internship programs, it is common to find many districts which employ an intern each year. While no comparative cost data have been reported, it seems reasonable to suspect that such programs on a statewide basis (e.g. Illinois, Ohio) serve to hold down costs for school psychological services at the local level. These states provide quality control over such programs via a system of university, district and State Department of Education approvals.

Conclusion

Three suggestions have been made regarding the cost effectiveness of school psychological services to rural areas. First, districts may form joint agreement districts that span several districts or counties and are typically available throughout the state. These agreements usually provide a full range of special educational and related services to member districts. Secondly, two or more districts may formally agree to share the costs of a full-time school psychologist as opposed to externally contracting for services at per diem rates. Dollar cost savings vary but are significant in combination with non-dollar advantages and in the context of typically tight education budgets. Participating in university and statewide internship programs provides another alternative, especially when service expansion or initiation must be done under unusually restrictive financial conditions. All of these alternatives have advantages for both the consuming district and the school psychologist provider. Despite rising public educational costs for salaries, benefits, travel, etc., the full-time employment of school psychologists under shared agreements should provide a reasonable restraint compared to the costs of such items in the non-school sector. As private individuals and agencies attempt to also maintain travel, retirement, etc., for themselves, they will be forced to raise the per diem or per case cost of services to districts. Given the cost of an hour of diagnostic or therapeutic time in a clinic ($50-$80), the costs of per diem services in the above examples may be conservative.

The terms "negotiate" and "share" have been used repeatedly in this discussion. They are central to the provision of cost-effective services in rural areas. Many rural systems are not cost-effective because they simply refuse to negotiate shared agreements with other districts. Politics, distrust, and other reasons could be cited for

this. Fortunately, there are enough examples of outstanding cooperative agreements that the future should be optimistic. Finally, let me reiterate that the provision of cost-effective services is both a financial and role function matter. Districts which foolishly expect psychologists to test three or four children per day for possible special class placement will remain ineffective in any of the examples provided. A cost-effective program must seek to utilize psychologists for the improvement of children in regular programs as well as providing services for that minority of children requiring special programs. In this manner, the school psychologist assists the district in the goal of preventing as many special class placements as possible while providing appropriate education for all children. Under these assumptions, shared agreements for services should ensure long-term cost effectiveness.

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FREE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY NATIONAL INFORMATION CENTER FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND YOUTH (NICHCY)

The National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth (NICHCY) was established as part of the Education of the Handicapped Act (Public Law 92-142 as amended by PL 98-199) to ensure that accurate, timely information is available to parents of handicapped children. NICHCY staff (consisting of parents, educators and care givers) researches various issues and responds by individual letter or by sending packets of information. Efforts are made to send the names of resource people living near the inquirer who can provide follow-up advice.

When a project or program proves especially effective, people want to spread the good news. NICHCY collects this information and shares it with others who are facing similar problems. Files of programs and services are maintained for each state. Four times a year, publications containing news on many topics are sent to members of the mailing list. Twice a year, **Transition Summary** shares successful experiences in preparing people with handicaps for independent adulthood. Finally, NICHCY staff works with groups of people to increase public awareness of the rights, responsibilities, and benefits to society of the total inclusion of children, youth and adults with handicaps.

NICHCY is a division of Interstate Research Associates, Rosslyn, Virginia, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Special Education Programs. For more information, contact: NICHCY, P.O. Box 1492, Washington, D.C. 20013.

RURAL SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION FROM THE NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The National Rural Development Institute offers a clearinghouse for Rural Student Scholarships. Listed below are examples of currently available scholarships.

Robinson Rural Education Fellowship

Robinson Rural Education Fellowships are for rural students who intend to return to their home region after college to provide needed services. The applicant must enroll in a Master's, Specialist, or Doctoral Program in one of five departments within Western Michigan University's College of Education: Counseling and Personnel; Education and Professional Development; Educational Leadership; Health, Physical Education, Recreation; or Special Education. Concurrently, the applicant must gain admittance to Western Michigan University's Graduate College.

Recipients are awarded $5,000 in the form of a graduate fellowship to be paid in bi-weekly increments during the fall and winter semesters.

Interested students should send a letter of application stating their reasons for wishing to study at Western Michigan University and their future plans for using their education in their home region. A current resume including educational background, work experience, and other related information must accompany letters of application. Additionally, two letters of recommendation should be sent directly by the applicant to: Dr. Arnold M. Gallegos, Dean, College of Education, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

Migrant Scholarships

Scholarships for rural migrants who wish to continue their education beyond high school are available through the Geneseo Migrant Center in Geneseo, New York. For more information, contact: Gloria Maffera, BOCES, Geneseo Migrant Center, Holcomb Building, 210-211, Geneseo, NY 14454.

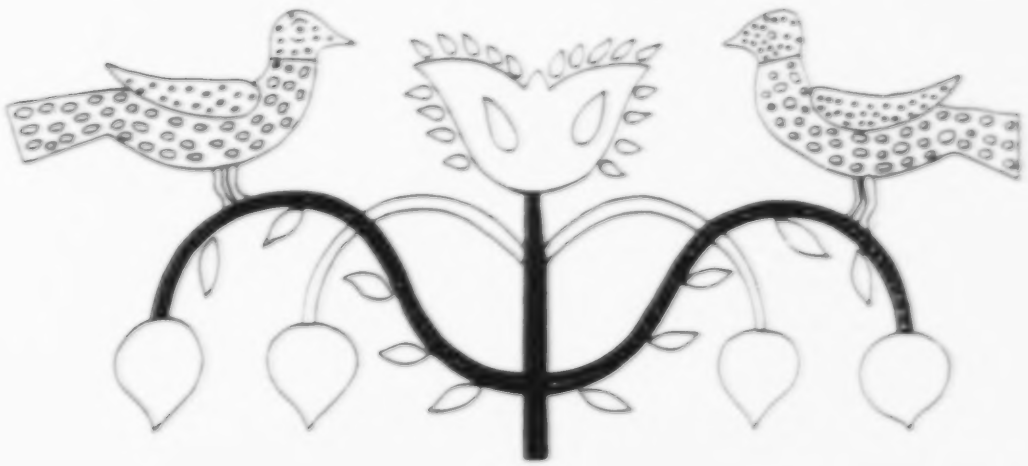
Rural Student Scholarships Offered by the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES)

The American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) is initiating a national competition for scholarships to be offered to two outstanding rural high school graduates who are committed to careers as rural educators. One award will be given to a student planning to specialize in special education. (Students who have a disability are strongly encouraged to apply.)

These scholarships will assist rural schools in the following ways:

1) Scholarship recipients will commit to work in rural schools, as personnel recruitment and retention are serious problems in rural America.
2) Scholarship recipients will be specifically trained to work in rural schools. For example, each scholarship recipient will be required to attend a university that offers curricula designed to train students to teach in rural areas.
3) A **Directory of University Programs Offering Training for Rural Education** is being developed by the National Rural Development Institute. The fact that this directory will be widely circulated to interested students, faculty, and others should encourage greater preservice accountability.

For further information regarding the Rural Student Scholarship Program, contact the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES), National Rural Development Institute, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.



RESOURCES AND EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

EDUCATIONAL BOOKS ON TAPE

Recording for the Blind, Inc., is a national non-profit service organization that provides educational books on tape. They are free-on-loan to individuals who cannot read standard printed materials because of visual, physical or perceptual handicaps. The master library contains 60,000 titles with about 3,500 books added each year. Borrowers must register by completing an application-for-service form, which requires diagnostic information and the signature of a professional. For more information, contact: Recording for the Blind, Inc., 20 Roszel Road, Princeton, NJ 08540; (609) 452-0606.

READING RESOURCE LABS

This highly successful program of Caswell County's Reading Resource Labs entails a three-fold organization: 1) diagnosis, 2) prescription, and 3) evaluation. The success of the program is attributed to careful staff selection, teacher expertise and close monitoring of individual students. Opportunities are provided for teachers and aides to attend symposiums. The teachers then share ideas and conduct workshops within the school system. Teachers and aides are eager to take visitors into their labs to see the process in action. For further information, contact: G.L. McGee, Director, ECIA, Caswell County Schools, P.O. Box 160, Yanceyville, NC 27379; (919) 694-4116. SpecialNet: NC CASWELL.

LEARNING DISABILITIES TEENLINE FUNDED

Closer Look, a national information center for youth with learning disabilities, proudly announces that the Closer Look **L.D. Teenline** has been refunded by the Foundation for Children with Learning Disabilities in New York. This toll-free service responds to thousands of parents, educators and learning-disabled youth who are looking for information and referral on services, materials and publications, rehabilitation and training, colleges with support programs, parent groups, counseling agencies and independent living programs. Callers can also request Closer Look's helpful publication list. For more information, call (800) 522-3458 between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (EST), Monday through Friday. In Metropolitan Washington, DC call 822-7900.

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS IN NORTH DAKOTA

NEW OUTLOOKS HOUSE

This is a live-in program for educable mentally handicapped high school students of the North Dakota Lake Region. Students learn vocational skills and actually work at a job during the school year. Local employers cooperate by providing jobs and hours that are appropriate for individual needs. The program works well in this rural setting, as many school districts are too small to operate such a special individualized program. Over twenty surrounding school districts help support this project.

HARMONY HOUSE

Harmony House is a public school-supported residential program in the Devil's Lake area for severely emotionally disturbed youth. Students attend a special class at the local high school and some are enrolled in outside classes as determined by the Individual Education Program (IEP). The goals and objectives from the IEP are utilized in the total treatment plan in the classroom and in Harmony House.

The behavioral program includes utilization of the positive peer culture system (PPC), which was developed by Harry Vorrath. This is a group process designed to help students eliminate negative behavior and replace it with behavior that is more socially acceptable.

Interagency cooperation between the public schools, social services board, and the local law enforcement board helped to create the program. Efforts to stabilize the staff have included recruitment of specially trained teachers who are already settled into the region. Financial support from local communities was used to purchase the facility, and an annual "Thank You" day is held to acknowledge this and other support. Deviant behaviors among the residents have declined, and there has been a change in community attitudes toward troubled youth. Program effectiveness has also been documented by increases in general achievement and behavior change.

For more information on New Outlooks House or Harmony House, contact: Don Boehmer, Lake Region Special Education Cooperative, Devil's Lake, ND 58301; (701) 662-5036 or (701) 662-3479. (This vignette was adapted from a SpecialNet message produced by the National Information Clearinghouse on Handicapped Children and Youth, and a newspaper article submitted by Don Boehmer.)

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RESOURCES AND EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

RURAL PHYSICAL EDUCATORS AND SPECIAL EDUCATORS TRAINED IN ADAPTIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

For several years the Department of Physical Education and Recreation at Western Kentucky University has been training physical educators in adaptive physical education for the rural schools. The need for trained personnel in this field was seen by the Western Kentucky University staff, and a preservice grant was approved in 1983 for training rural educators in adaptive physical education. Participants receive a master's degree at the completion of the two-year program. All of these students are employed educators; therefore, the material learned in classes can be integrated into their own programs. Over the past few years, 181 teachers in 32 countries have been trained in adaptive physical education.

For more information contact: Walter C. Mason, Project Director, Western Kentucky University, Department of Physical Education and Recreation, Bowling Green, KY, 42101, (502) 745-3347.

TRAINING PROVIDED FOR IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES TO VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Portland State University has been awarded a special project for "field-based inservice to educators of severely visually handicapped learners in rural Oregon." The project is preparing case managers to provide direct educational services to visually handicapped children in rural settings. Its objectives are: 1) to provide case managers with classroom management and supervisory skills enabling them to communicate and work more effectively with school personnel, parents, paraprofessionals and others from allied disciplines; 2) to prepare case managers in providing outreach and consultative services to school and community-based programs, while acting as advocates for visually handicapped learners; and 3) to develop an effective communication system among case managers in rural school districts, including greater accessibility to educational materials for visually handicapped learners. For more information, contact: Sheldon Mason, Portland State University, Department of Special Education, P.O. Box 751, Portland, OR 97207, (503) 229-4832.

RURAL SECONDARY VOCATIONAL MODEL ASSISTS STUDENTS

Obtaining a job placement beyond secondary instruction is a goal of the handicapped student. During 1981-83, Educational Service Unit #9, Nebraska, developed a cooperative service delivery model that would improve the vocational training opportunities available to high school-age handicapped students. ESU #9 was interested in developing effective approaches and strategies that would meet the needs of students. Under this model, student identification and referral, vocational evaluation, individual program development, job exploration, and on-the-job training were services available to students.

A centralized service delivery model was implemented in which a core staff delivered the vocational services to students. The centralized approach was being compared with the traditional non-centralized vocational approach. The outcome of this experiment did not result in more appropriate job placements for students, and longer job retention was not positively affected.

Therefore, the service delivery model was modified to a decentralized approach where secondary resource teachers were taught the skills and facts necessary to deliver vocational services to students. Results found that participating students, who had graduated, were employed for fewer hours than past students. Also, job retention was affected negatively—this possibly being the result of the recent economic recession. However, the decentralized model had a positive impact on the number of students placed in part-time or full-time jobs.

In addition, 72% of the students who graduated with vocational education experience in 1983 were placed in jobs as compared to 47% in 1979.

For further information, contact Educational Service Unit #9, 1117 E. South Street, Box 2047, Hastings, NE 68901.

NATIONAL RURAL INDEPENDENT LIVING NETWORK DEVELOPING SKILLS AND SERVICES NETWORK

The National Rural Independent Living Network (NRILN) is assisting rural communities in developing a skills and services network to provide opportunities for people with a disability to live more independently in rural America. Communities with active potential coordinating facilities such as libraries, ministerial associations, corner stores, schools, etc., are selected for participation.

With the support of the coordinating institution, the community develops an Independent Living Network to meet the area's special needs and resources. The system consists of a group of volunteers who will function as coordinators of services and skills and a group of volunteers and professionals who will provide these services and skills to persons with disabilities. Services are provided to individuals with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. Services of the network could also be used for respite care by families with a disabled family member.

NRILN currently has established networks in Alaska, Idaho, Kansas, Wyoming, Colorado, Minnesota, Tennessee, Louisiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and New Hampshire. Additional sites which reflect different topographies and population densities within rural America are currently being selected. The goal of the NRILN is to establish 500 independent living networks by March 1986.

For additional information, contact: National Rural Independent Living Network, School of Education, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

THE PROSECUTION OF MENTALLY RETARDED PARENTS FOR MANSLAUGHTER OF THEIR CHILDREN

by
Katherine Van Warner
Social Worker
Community Home Health and Hospice
Longview, Washington

The people were not criminals. Even the prosecutor indicated the couple did everything they could to save their children.
Flora Stuart, attorney
ABC News

Much has been written on the parents of mentally retarded children but little on the mentally retarded as parents. Little is available regarding retarded adults and their adjustment to the community; studies on the adult retarded concern institutional behavior and life in residential centers. Issues of sex and procreation are rarely addressed.

In April 1984, I had the privilege of participating as sociologist and social worker in a much publicized trial of a mentally retarded couple in rural Kentucky. The defendants, Edward Cox, aged 37, and Frances Elizabeth Cox, age 30, were charged with second degree manslaughter in the deaths of two children by fire. While the parents rushed to rescue two children, one baby and grandmother, the others were left behind. News broadcasts presented a generally unfavorable portrait of two obviously overwhelmed parents who were interviewed callously at the scene of their recent loss. Later, images of the overweight father being hustled off to jail were even less appealing. Statements by accusatory prosecutors were only slightly tempered by defense claims of mental retardation.

The legal paradoxes of the case make it at once unique and complex:

- Persons charged not for a criminal act but for a non-criminal act, of **omission** not **commission**.
- Persons charged for non-act during a time of dire emergency.
- Persons charged not with neglect but manslaughter to be tried in a higher court.
- Persons charged are diagnosed as mentally retarded.

Despite the case's legal peculiarities, close examination of the record provides a rare inside glimpse into the administrative and judicial treatment of retarded adults in trouble. The present paper will ponder legal and social peculiarities of the case of the **Commonwealth of Kentucky v. Edward and Frances Elizabeth Cox (1984)**. Implications for social workers are discussed. Facts are drawn from direct observation of the trial proceedings, review of germane legal and psychological literature on retardation and neglect, and access to extensive court documents.

Background Characteristics

The Cox parents received no special education as far as they remembered. The last five years the Coxes have had five children and have resided with Mrs. Cox, the grandmother. Edward Cox has an IQ of 68 on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and of 70 (WAIS-R). His score is at the top of the mild mentally retarded range and exceeds only 2 percent of the individuals in his age group. His adaptive functioning is low; yet he is emotionally stable, having held several jobs as farm laborer.

Frances Cox ("Liz") has not been able to work, being far more impaired than her husband. Reading at the first grade level Liz scores 61 on WAIS IQ test. She thus exceeds only one-half of one percent of the population. In addition to the retardation, psychological test scores show evidence of memory impairment indicative of organic brain damage. The picture presented is of a woman relying on her smarter husband in almost every way.

Living in conditions of the utmost poverty, the Coxes necessarily have had a longstanding association with the department of social services and their affiliates. Complaints of poor health, malnutrition and failure to thrive prompted the department of social services to remove the children from the home at one point. Social workers supervised the clearing of the home, installation of woodburning stoves and ultimate return of the children. There was still no running water in the home or modern plumbing. There was only one functional exit on the side of the house and newspapers used for insulation created a fire hazard.

Review of the Literature on Retardation and Neglect

Review of the social work literature on the parenting skills of the retarded adults reveals that (1) neglect is commonly reported in the homes of mentally retarded parents and (2) of all the situations of child neglect (e.g., schizophrenia, depression, alcoholism, drug addiction), the retarded are the most amenable to change.

Schilling, Schinke, Blythe, and Barth (1982), provided the most comprehensive survey of the literature to date. Drawing on writings from the field of child protection and mental retardation, they found that 13 out of 14 studies showed that mentally retarded persons were unsatisfactory parents or were overrepresented in abusing or neglecting samples. Bear in mind, though, that intellectually impaired parents may be scrutinized more closely than others by welfare authorities with whom they come in contact.

Polansky, DeSaix, and Sharlin (1972), in their classic study, **Child Neglect**, devote a special section to discussion of the mentally retarded mother. The sample of 90 neglectful families indicated that the quality of care given the children does not seem to be grossly affected until the mother's score drops below 70. Inadequate and neglectful care may be expected when the IQ of the mother is below 60.

Shenican (1956) conducted a systematic study in Britain of the intelligence of 100 neglectful mothers. Seventy women fell into the retarded group. These women were stable emotionally, but when family responsibilities outgrew their capacity, they became overwhelmed until an outside agency stepped in.

There is some evidence to indicate that neglecting parents who are mildly retarded and emotionally stable are good candidates for habilitation (Shenican, 1956). Hertz (1979) refers to numerous empirical studies and legal documents to challenge "the erroneous assumption of parental inadequacy" of retarded people. Parental retardation does not preclude parents from providing love and affection to their children. The social work journal, **Practice Digest** reports success in teaching retarded mothers how to parent. Mothers with extensive brain damage, however, do not retain the information (Guest, 1981). Rosenberg and McTate (1982) in their educational experimentation with clients referred for serious parenting problems concluded that for those considered to be in the borderline or mild range of retardation, IQ is not a good predictor of parenting ability.

In short, although the literature shows a high rate of child neglect by mentally retarded parents, all retarded parents are by no means neglectful, and those who are have a fair prognosis for change.

Legal Aspects of Retardation and Neglect

A significant increase in child neglect cases involving mentally

retarded parents is evidenced in caseloads of both trial and appellate courts (Hertz, 1979). This change is a reflection of greater rights of the mentally retarded, both to have children and to have legal representation in court (Hertz). Harsh judicial treatment of mentally retarded litigants is common. In her comparative analysis of "the law and the problem parent," Payne (1978) notes that of homosexual, retarded, mentally ill and incarcerated parents, retarded parents are treated with the least respect.

The Commonwealth v. Cox is not a case of child custody or termination of parental rights (although the Coxes did lose the custody of their children in a separate hearing) but of criminal prosecution of a retarded couple for an act of neglect. This case was tried in a higher court. Custody matters are generally handled in juvenile or family courts. Criminal court prosecution is a punitive matter, to "right the wrong." Family courts deal with "the best interests of the child" in terms of family placement and so on. Nevertheless, the judicial treatment of retarded parents **qua** parents is strikingly similar in both situations. The ethical issues of procreation and parenthood always lurk just beneath the surface. There is, in the United States, a general attitude that sexual activity and reproduction among retarded couples should be actively discouraged (Wolfensberger, 1972).

Turning now to the Cox trial, we find that the retardation issue in a criminal trial takes on a character all its own. Whereas, in neglect proceedings the retardation of parents is a liability used against parents in the claims on their children (Hertz, 1979; Payne, 1978), in criminal prosecution, the retardation becomes a legal defense against the charges of "willful violation of the law." **Commonwealth v. the Coxes** brings us into the murky issues of competence, legal responsibility and duty under duress. Were the Coxes, as retarded, capable of carrying out their legal obligations toward their children? Or were they, in fact, prosecuted not **in spite of** the retardation but **because** of the retardation? In other words, were they prosecuted because they could not justify their own actions on the spur of the moment and were seemingly willing to admit to anything the police wanted them to admit? Finally, how would those of **average** intelligence have reacted in the crisis of a raging and uncontrollable fire?

Mental incompetency pertains to a lack of capacity caused by mental defects or mental illness (Mechanic, 1980). When an individual is charged with criminal neglect as in the case of **Robinson v. Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1978**, the Kentucky Court of Appeals ruled that the failure of a person to perceive a danger when he is mentally incapable of perceiving it cannot be the basis for criminal liability. In the Robinson case, the mother who was mentally retarded was charged with reckless homicide in her failure to feed her infant child who subsequently died.

The legal issue of revelance to the Cox trial is the relationship of rules of criminal responsibility and mental retardation. When insanity does not apply as a defense, the doctrine of partial or diminished responsibility may do so. According to Anglo-Saxon common law, for an act to be a crime there must be **mens rea** or criminal intent. When a mentally retarded person, for instance, charged with larceny, can raise a reasonable doubt concerning his intent to steal (by means of mental disability), he or she is entitled to be acquitted of the charge (Fox, 1976).

Thus we see, in the legal literature, that the general finding of "incompetence" based on intellectual deficiencies in retarded parents is both a criterion for taking away parental rights and for reducing punishment in criminal litigation. Morris (1976), writing for the President's Commission on Mental Retardation, raises strong objection to any special laws or treatment for the mentally retarded citizen. Experience has demonstrated that in practice these intended special benevolences stigmatize retarded people and inflict on them more suffering than the rules of law from which they were to be protected. I agree with Morris' call for an end to the not-guilty-by-reason-of-insanity plea. However, in a case of a crime of omission, the diminished responsibility model is essential in the interest of fairness.

The fundamental legal issue for the case of Edward and Liz Cox is whether the jurors, following the judge's instructions, were likely to decide that mental retardation was a factor in preventing the rescue of their two small children. As we have seen, the law tends to be ambiguous on this point of retardation as a legal defense.

A second legal issue, equally harrying, is the law pertaining to duty and emergency. In a sudden and dangerous crisis, in a situation of grave personal danger, one's legal requirements of duty - such as the duty of parental protection - is diminished (**American Jurisprudence**, 1971). Thus a mother or father could not legally be compelled to run through a burning room to rescue children to the extent that this would put them and their other children in severe danger.

The Trial

The prosecution's opening statement charged the Cox parents with manslaughter in the second degree for the death of two of their children. The defense stressed that the case was about opportunity and ability. After the prosecution brought forward witnesses for a day and a half who testified against the actions of Mr. and Mrs. Cox, the defense moved for acquittal on grounds of lack of evidence of wanton endangerment, of criminal intent. The judge granted that motion.

Implications for Rural Social Workers

Five babies in five years, the poverty, isolation, the fire deaths of the two children, the prosecution of the parents — all are events that never should have happened. Good social work practice, generously financed, could have made the difference between death and life in this case, between smooth functioning and the deepest sorrow. But, as Dern (1984) correctly notes, the field of developmental disabilities has not been and is not now a prestigious field for social workers. Accordingly, social workers are not fulfilling a major role in developing services and providing ongoing treatment for the mentally impaired. Mentally retarded clients are seen by the society as "losers" and some of this taint adheres to their helpers (Doernberg, 1980).

Unlike other handicapped and minority groups, those citizens who are retarded cannot organize and speak for themselves. Among the most impoverished and vulnerable groups in the country, retarded people are in no position to take advantage of legal and political remedies. They cannot muster financial resources. They cannot function without extensive external and family support systems. In all likelihood, long-term multifaceted aid to the family could stave off the kind of tragedy that took place here. In the Cox case, records from the department of social services (as revealed in police grand jury testimony) indicate that little effort was made of a preventive nature - teaching, providing referral to other services, including help for the disabled and birth control information, or counseling and homemaker services. Significantly, the social support that the Coxes received after the fire came exclusively from the church and other rural community groups who rallied together to provide food, work, and clothing. By then, following the trial, the department of social services was no longer involved, having already removed the three surviving children from the home. Earlier, their donation of two woodburning stoves, improperly installed, had contributed to the losses that are the subject of this paper. According to reports from the defense attorneys, no one from the Department for Human Resources was willing to speak for the Coxes at the trial.

It is the responsibility of welfare agencies and of a caring society to accommodate provision of social services to those who are unable to manage their lives independently. Legislative reforms of the present structure of care for the mentally disabled can create financial incentives for the states to establish wide-ranging community services. Analysis of the legal case against the Coxes is an illustration of how neglect **of** mentally retarded parents can result in neglect **by** mentally retarded parents. The Cox trial is a study in preventable tragedy. Although some technical aspects of this case were unique in terms of legal history, the kind of administrative, legal and social treatment to which this retarded couple have been subjected is typical of the treatment of retarded persons who set up independent households in the community. Comments made about these people in the grand jury transcript show that they were referred to as "illiterates" and as people who "aren't like you and I sitting here," and as "very low educated people." Social workers, instead of echoing these sentiments, could step forth as advocates for their clients.

A pressing need exists for research in the area of retarded adults who function in the community and on the social services required. In light of present trends, emphasis should be on studies of the non-institutionalized retarded population. Studies of the effects of experimental programs such as the Intensive Services to Families at Risk Project at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (Rosenberg and McTate, 1982) and at the Northwest Oklahoma Educational Services Center (Guest, 1981) are small but positive steps in this direction.

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RESPONSES TO "THE PROSECUTION OF MENTALLY RETARDED PARENTS FOR THE MANSLAUGHTER OF THEIR CHILDREN"

By Marvin Carrier

Marvin Carrier is director of the St. Landry Parish School Board in Opelousas, Louisiana.

After having read the article, "The Prosecution of Mentally Retarded Parents for Manslaughter of Their Children," my initial response was one of some perplexity. I am not certain whether the majority of mental retardates are treated in such a manner in Kentucky, or if this is an isolated case initiated by some ambitious attorney. If that is the case, then I think the voters of the county need to take a look at what type of insensitive individuals they are voting for.

The article indicated that the house was a "raging and uncontrolable fire." Yet, the Coxes managed to save four out of the six people who were in that home, which sounds pretty admirable to me. It appears to me that the party at fault is the social service agency which provided two woodburning stoves "improperly installed" in a home with no running water to douse a fire. I am uncertain about the type and scope of social services provided in the state of Kentucky. In our state we have a wide network of mental health facilities which work hand-in-glove with the Division of Health and Human Resources. If children are removed from the home because of neglect or abuse, it is almost automatic that their parents are referred to a mental health facility for training in proper parenting procedures. The parents must acquire some degree of competency before the court will allow the children to return to their home situation.

As indicated by much of the research quoted in the article, "I.Q. is not a good predictor of parenting ability," and "parental retardation does not preclude parents from providing love and affection to their children." All retarded parents are by no means neglectful and those who are have a fair prognosis of change." I am of the opinion that parenting procedures, whether practiced by those who are retarded or not, are primarily learned from our parents. The way they parented us determines to a great extent how we tend to parent our children.

I would predict if the parents of a mentally retarded child were good parents — kind, loving and caring — that child, in return, would probably be a good, kind, loving and caring parent, also. By the same token, children who are not retarded and yet come from a family in which parents are indifferent, callous and cruel, would probably practice the same methods with their children, regardless of intellectual factors. While I have no evidence to support this, I would predict that parents who are emotionally disturbed tend to be more abusive and neglectful of their children than those who are mentally retarded.

With regard to the issue of procreation, outside of complete sterilization of every mentally retarded individual in the United States (which is a totally unacceptable procedure), the answer may be to provide training and public assistance to these unfortunate individuals. Intensive educational programs on birth control would be of some help. In addition, once the pregnancy is recognized, training should be provided prior to the birth of the child to teach the mother how to properly care for the child.

As for rights of the retarded within the judicial system, it would appear that the retarded have the same legal rights as any other citizens of this country. In our state, one is not judged to be "incompetent on the basis of intellectual deficiencies," but instead it must be established whether he/she is capable of assisting in his/her own defense. Retardation need not be a major factor in coming to that decision. There is a broad spectrum of social services presently available, in addition to services that provide judicial advice, which can assist the mentally retarded to function within society.

RESPONSES TO "THE PROSECUTION OF MENTALLY RETARDED PARENTS FOR THE MANSLAUGHTER OF THEIR CHILDREN" (Continued)

By John Gerdtz

John Gerdtz, M.S.W., has been a social worker in the U.S. Army and for the Division of Mental Retardation of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. He is currently doing dissertation research for a Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

"The Prosecution of Mentally Retarded Parents for the Manslaughter of Their Children" raised a number of important issues for social workers involved in the field of developmental disabilities. The legal hounding of Mr. and Mrs. Cox after the tragic deaths of their two children was a great injustice, although the parents finally received justice through the courts. The author's observations about the lack of interest in developmental disabilities by the social work profession, and the need for further research in this whole area, were right on target.

However, I was concerned by the author's assertion that "good social work practice, generously financed, could have made the difference between life and death in this case," and that this was a "preventable tragedy." I understand why concerned professionals struggling to cope with a tragic situation could feel this way. These statements are based on two major assumptions which I consider to be debatable.

Assumption one: If comprehensive, well-financed services were available, most families would use them. This is a common assumption of many professionals when advocating more services or funding. Unfortunately, there is evidence that even when services are available, relatively few families make use of them. DeBerry, Ristau and Galland (1984) found in their survey of early intervention programs in Minnesota that the level of parent participation in family support programs was extremely low. Powell (1984) discovered a high level of attrition from many parent education and support programs. The reasons for this lack of participation are unclear, and much more research is needed.

I am not arguing that families like the Coxes would always refuse to participate in family support programs, but we need to recognize the possibility of low participation and high attrition from these programs, no matter how well-financed they are. This raises further issues. Should certain families be required by court order to participate in these programs? What effect would mandated participation have on program effectiveness?

Assumption two: Once the family was involved in services, these services would be effective. A number of reviews of the research (Berger and Foster, 1976; Wolfensberger, 1971) have noted the lack of acceptable evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of most common interventions used with families with mentally retarded children. Some programs (Armstrong, 1983) have good evidence for effectiveness, but the overall lack of research on program effectiveness in this area is troubling. The family support program cited by Rosenberg and McTate (1982) reported a success rate of approximately fifty percent with families, although this figure seems to be based on an informal evaluation.

I am not suggesting that social workers and other professionals give up the struggle to provide adequate and effective services for mentally retarded parents and their children. At the same time we must avoid the temptation to promise more than we can deliver. I think we can safely make the following promises to these families and to the communities which pay for the services.

—Services will be adapted, as much as possible, to the special needs, strengths and desires of individual families.

—Services will respect the legal rights of mentally retarded parents, and also recognize the responsibilities of these parents by reporting actual or suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

—Services will benefit the majority of families served, although there can be no reasonable guarantee of success in all cases. Effectiveness will be demonstrated by means of systematic, empirical evidence, and the agency will provide evidence of their efficient use of resources (see Armstrong, 1983, for one possible approach to evaluation).

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TRAINING FOR PARENTS WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED

Parents Learning Together is a training program for parents with mental retardation. The six-month-long program includes as many as fifteen family units who come to a center-based program with their preschool children for six hours a day, four days a week.

The first two weeks are spent assessing speech, language, hearing, cognitive skills, parent-child interactions, and the child-rearing environment in the home (including use of toys, books, and health aspects). From these assessments, the established curriculum is individualized to teach parenting skills such as discipline, touching, language stimulation, use of community resources, safety, nutrition, medical care, parent-child play, and basic skills such as bathing children, brushing teeth, doing laundry, and caring for hair. Parents are tested prior to the program and post-tested for skills acquisition.

Home visits are made twice weekly to assure transfer of knowledge from class to home situations. Community resources such as Planned Parenthood, dentists, lawyers, rehabilitation counselors, and audiologists provide parents with information and free services. After the training sessions are finished, follow-up home visits are made to post-test knowledge and skills.

For more information, contact Parents Learning Together, New Hope Learning Center, 1200 S. Grant, St. Louis, MO 63103, (314) 776-2414.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE REGARDING INNOVATIONS IN RURAL EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAMS

The first annual "National Conference Concerning Innovations in Rural Education Training Programs" will be held this fall in Bellingham, Washington. The conference is hosted by the National Rural Development Institute of Western Washington University and is co-sponsored by the National Rural Development Institute, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), and Phi Delta Kappa. Innovative curricula and other successes in training rural educators will be shared.

As participants will include two-year and four-year university and college administrators, state and local education agency personnel, and related agencies such as departments of agriculture, a series of "job alike" sessions will be held. In addition, minorities and minority educators will be strongly encouraged to attend and present papers on successful strategies for training personnel to work in cross-cultural settings.

Inter-university teams will be developed to create on-going technical assistance networks. The networks will include a variety of resources housed within the National Rural Development Institute.

The following topics will be addressed during conference sessions and workshops:

- *Enhancing the Rural Teacher Education Network
- *Interstate Capacity Building
- *State Services (ranging from agriculture to vocational rehabilitation)
- *Meeting Accreditation/Endorsement Standards
- *Innovative Models (e.g., fifth-year internships combining pay and practical experience)
- *Collaboration Between Universities and Local and State Education Agencies
- *University Roles in Inservice Education
- *Partnerships with County Extension and Volunteer Rural Service Groups
- *Non-traditional Adult Learner Programs and Activities
- *Providing Educational Services in Cross-Cultural Settings
- *"Job Alike" Meetings
- *Resources of the National Rural Education Research Consortium
- *Practicum and Internship Techniques to Overcome Logistics, Role Model, and Other Problems Concerned with Quality Rural Training
- *Technical Innovations (e.g., remote electronic practicum)

Additional sessions and workshops will be scheduled in response to interest.

For further information or a copy of the "Call for Papers," contact: National Rural Development Institute, Miller Hall 359, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225 (206) 676-3576.

ACRES NORTHWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Because of the tremendous level of interest in building a strong ACRES network in the Northwest U.S., a Northwest Regional ACRES Conference will be held during the fall of 1985. Those interested in serving rural individuals with disabilities are encouraged to participate. The States of Alaska, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Northern California, Utah, Wyoming, Montana and Nevada will be the primary focus.

For further information or a copy of the "Call for Papers," contact the ACRES Headquarters, National Rural Development Institute, Miller Hall 359, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225 (206) 676-3576.

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